THE COLOR OF MONEY

by

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STORY DEPARTMENT

REVISED

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VOICE OVER

9-ball is rotation pool. The balls are pocketed in numbered order. The only ball that means anything, that wins it, is the nine. A player can shoot eight trick shots in a row, blow the nine and lose. On the other hand, a player can get the nine on the break if the balls spread right. Which is all to say, that luck plays a part in 9-ball.

But for some players, luck itself is a skill ... or an art.

OPENING CREDITS

1. WE SEE, almost totally in shadow, a pool player, frozen like a mounted suit of Samurai armor. He's immobile, seated, waiting, surrounded by his sacraments; his cue (held like a staff), a small table by his side supporting a tiny hill of baby powder and a full ashtray. The only motion in the frame is a thin stream of wafting cigarette smoke from the ashtray.

2. Faces, frontal and profile, also immobile, impassive, waiting.

3. OVERHEAD SHOT of a pool table. A diamond-shaped formation of nine balls centered at one end, a player's hands and stick emerging from shadow to shoot the break shot at the other. WE SEE the break in slow motion.

4. OVERHEAD of the shadow-player running all nine balls. Normal speed.

END OPENING CREDITS

1 INT: THE "HI-CUE" BILLIARDS AND GAME CENTER - DAY

There's a red cigarette scarred wall to wall carpet, a bar-grill, a jukebox. Along one wall a bank of video machines.

The players range in age from kids to senior citizens; in ethnicity from white to black to Puerto Rican to Chinese.

The only sanctuary for serious players is a two table niche near the bar bordered by roll out aluminum bleachers. The tables are in reasonably good shape, well lit and the vibes are those of concentration and money on the line. There's an invisible shield between this niche and the rest of the room.

THE BAR

TRACKING SHOT along the bar top. WE SEE various drink and cigarette still lifes, hands; hear snatches of conversation, and in the background the sporadic yet ever present clack of pool balls.

During this TRACKING, the man's voice we hear is Eddie Felson.

EDDIE (OS)
Check this out. Old MacDonald. More like Young MacDonald but it tastes like six year bonded.

WE SEE Eddie Felson, in his fifties, liquor salesman. He's got a clipboard, a bottle standing upright in an open attache case.

He's feeding a shot of liquor to the bartender, Janelle, in her forties. She leans on her crossed forearms towards Eddie.

EDDIE
(carefully feeding her)
To your health.

Eddie dries her lips with his thumb and watches for her reaction.

JANELLE
(making a pass at her own lips)
That's good stuff.

EDDIE
That's very good stuff.

A young long-haired lanky kid in a black heavy metal T-shirt stands slightly behind Eddie and taps his shoulder. The kid is wearing a fingerless black weight-lifting glove. He's holding a cue stick. Eddie ignores him.

EDDIE (contd)
Tastes like top shelf, right? I get you a case of that for thirty-five fifty less than your wholesale on Jack Daniels, forty-five fifty less than your wholesale on Wild Turkey.

JANELLE
Who are you trying to sell? I'm not one of your restaurant chains, y'know.

EDDIE
I don't "sell" — I'm doing this for you — for family.

JANELLE
Come to my house tonight ... I'll make you an omelette.

EDDIE
What kind of omelette?

JANELLE
What do you care?

EDDIE
Hey, what do you mean "What do I care!" It's the little things that turn me on. You know that.

KID (JULIAN)
Yo, Eddie ...

EDDIE
Anyways, you throw that into a Wild Turkey bottle, Old Grandad, whatever, you'd hardly be lying ... you don't even need iodine ... ... it's a beautiful bourbon, no?

JULIAN
Eddie ...

EDDIE
(patient)
Julian ... what am I doing here ... am I working?

JULIAN
I'm working too ... I got this guy ...
(shrugs and semi-whispers)
He's up for twenty a rack.

EDDIE
(to Janelle)
Excuse me ...
(to Julian)
What guy?

Julian nods over to the bank of video games where a twenty year old Italian kid, his back to us, his cue leaning between the video machines, is going berserk on a game of Q-Bert. This is Vincent, easy going, nice kid.

JULIAN
We're playing two, two and a half hours for five a game.
(beat)
He's up thirty.

Eddie raises an eyebrow.

JULIAN (contd)
Aw c'mon, man, I been playin' him off.

Julian turns to his buddies, other dark lanky guys, lounging around the hustlers' niche, for verification. Even though they're out of earshot they nod to Eddie in agreement.

Eddie shrugs, digs in his pocket, peels off a twenty. Julian snaps it up, strides back to the niche, stroking the length of his cue stick the whole way, props the stick on the rail, hunches over. His gestures are amphetamine fueled.

JULIAN (contd)
(shouting across the room to the video bank)
Yo, Vincent!

Vincent is going nuts on Q-Bert, doesn't answer. Julian looks back to the bar at Eddie. Julian and his buddies are laughing.

2 CONTD

JULIAN (contd)
(shouting)
Vin-cent! We're on!

Vincent just raises his hand in OK, his back to the action.

Eddie turns back to Janelle.

EDDIE
So what do you think?

JANELLE
Pick me up at ten.

EDDIE
What?

JANELLE
That's when I get off.

EDDIE
(pouring and leaning
forward to Janelle)
I'm talking bourbon. You know
the secret? These people?
They got a hold of aged kegs.
You know what aged kegs to a
young bourbon is like? That's
like getting bootleg thoroughbred
sperm and slipping it to a police
horse ...leave the other horses
back in the precinct house ...
So what are you tasting? You're
tasting a low fusil oil content
... you're tasting a low acidic
content. Just like the big guys
... it's the kegs.

JANELLE
(laughing)
Low fusil oil content. Where'd
they get the kegs? You can't
just get aged kegs like that.

Julian taps Eddie's shoulder.

Eddie pulls out another twenty without turning around.
Julian grabs it. Eddie grabs Julian's wrist.

EDDIE
(slightly pissed)
What happened?

Eddie lets him go.

EDDIE
(to Janelle)
He slipped ... where'd they get the kegs? Look ...
(with a conspiratorial wink)
they just do. You want to order Jack Daniels, I get my cut either way.

GIRL'S VOICE (CARMEN; OS)
On the snap, Vincent!

The sound of Vincent's break ... a thunderclap.

Eddie instinctively turns his head to the game, studies Vincent for a brief moment.

EDDIE
Kid's got a sledgehammer break, hah?
(pours himself a shot)
Bottoms up ... You know who loves this stuff? The Chinese.

Eddie jerks back a thumb at the Chinese.

JANELLE
(smirking)
It must be the low fusil oil content.

EDDIE
Don't kid yourself ... It has its effect, it's just one of those things you never think about but can make your day ... like electricity.

Julian is behind Eddie again tapping his shoulder.

JULIAN
(sheepish)
Eddie ... throw me another twenty?

EDDIE
Hey! That's sixty!

Julian shrugs, slightly embarrassed.

EDDIE (contd)
(hesitating)
Julian, who you working, me or him?

JULIAN
He's on the ropes, Eddie, he
just lucked out ... you know me ...

Eddie gives Julian another twenty.

As Julian returns to the table, Eddie casually checks out Vincent. The kid is talking to a girl, Carmen, young, dark, T-shirt and jeans. Vincent is fooling around with his cue stick, working it like a samurai sword; slipping it behind his back, holding it over his head, slipping it into an invisible scabbard at his hip.

Eddie, watching Vincent, absently gives Janelle a twenty dollar bill.

EDDIE
Pick some nice wine for tonight.

JANELLE
Red or white?

EDDIE
(double take; snatches
back his money with
mock outrage)
Well screw the whole thing if
it's gonna get complicated!

Janelle laughs.

EDDIE (contd)
(winking)
A nice white ...

CARMEN (OS)
On the snap, Vincent!

We hear the sound of Vincent's break again. Another thunderclap.

Eddie turns at the sound. Looks at Vincent with real interest for the first time.

3 INT. HI-CUE - DAY
EDDIE'S POV

WE SEE Vincent work the table with fluid precision. Eddie slowly rises.

JANELLE
Eddie, how about some labels
... can you get me some Wild
Turkey labels?

EDDIE
(on his feet, moving towards the table; distracted)
I'll see what I can do.

Eddie casually saunters over to the game, takes a seat on the aluminum bleacher next to Carmen and watches. Vincent starts to run the rack as Julian stands there without ever getting a shot.

EDDIE (contd)
(to Carmen)
Kid draws a bead, hah?

Vincent drops the nine. Julian looks over to the bar for Eddie. He doesn't realize Eddie's right there. Julian hands the twenty to Carmen. Eddie beams up at Julian. Julian is flustered.

EDDIE
(offering Julian another twenty; sarcastic)
Play him again ... I think he's really on the ropes now.

VINCENT
(to Julian)
We doin' it again, chief?

JULIAN
(mortified)
Eddie, I gotta split.

EDDIE
I'm sure you do.

VINCENT
(to Julian)
You goin'?

JULIAN
I gotta see somebody.

VINCENT
C'mon, one more game.

JULIAN
I'm bust.

VINCENT
So let's just play play.

JULIAN
(squinting)
Play play?

VINCENT
Yeah ... just play ... for play.
Show me what you got.

CARMEN
(exasperated)
Hey, Vincent ...

Julian looks at Eddie, incredulous. No one just "plays" when they can play for money.

VINCENT
Hey. I just want your best game, man. I think the money's throwing you off.
(beat)
I tell you what. I win ... no money ... you win ... I'll go for twenty.

Julian splits without a glance, as if Vincent is dangerously whacked.

CARMEN
(to Eddie)
You want to play him?

VINCENT
(imitates a boxer who just scored a K.O. — arms raised high in a V for Victory)
Carmen! Who's next!

EDDIE
(mock intimidated)
Me?
(beat)
Sure.

CARMEN
Twenty a rack?

EDDIE
Five hundred a rack.

CARMEN
You serious?

EDDIE
I never kid about money.

VINCENT
(to the room)
Next! Next! ...

Eddie grins at Carmen. She doesn't know what to do.

VINCENT (contd)
Cowards ... c'mon ... for the table ... just for the table ... no money.

4 INT. HI-CUE - DAY

Vincent goes back to the video bank. Carmen is blown away by the size of Eddie's offer. They stare at each other.

EDDIE
You don't know what you're doin', do you?

CARMEN
What do you mean?

EDDIE
You just blew five hundred dollars. That kid had both arms in traction he could beat anybody in the room.

CARMEN
Yeah ... he could ...

EDDIE
So I'll offer you again ... I'll play him for five hundred dollars.

Carmen is still paralyzed.

EDDIE (contd)
You don't know what to say, hah? Maybe I'm hustling you ... maybe not. You don't know ... but you <u>should</u> know ... you know when to say yes ... you know when to say no ... you know that ... everyone goes home in a limousine.

CARMEN
So what should I say, yes or no?

EDDIE
You should say no ... you know why? Because I'm an unknown
(MORE)

EDDIE (contd)
and it's too much money. See, he should be the unknown ... that would be beautiful ... you can control that ... play with that ... you follow me? So I'll offer you again ... I'll play him for five hundred dollars.

CARMEN
No.

EDDIE
(rising)
Actually you should've said yes ... but you wouldn't know that ... I don't know how you could ... It's very complicated. It's like ... which twin has the Tony ...
(shrugs)
Maybe they both do or maybe they're really bald ... or maybe Tony's some guy ... How would you know? ... See what I'm getting at? Plus like everything else, you need money.

CARMEN
(laughing)
You're crazy.

EDDIE
(calmly, seriously)
No I'm not ... I'm just common sense.

They stare at each other a beat.

EDDIE (contd)
Let me take both you guys to dinner tonight ...

CARMEN
You should ask Vincent.

EDDIE
No, you should ask Vincent.

5 INT: SEMI-FANCY SALAD BAR TYPE STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

The three of them at a table.

EDDIE
That's all very possible, I mean, you have to consider the odds of that happening -- There are a lot of good players. But let me explain. It really doesn't matter -- Vincent, you beat Julian. You know the last time Julian lost for me?

VINCENT
It's a game, man ... balls and a stick.

CARMEN
(laughing with admiration for the understatement)
Balls and a stick ... This is Vincent.

Vincent pinches Carmen's cheek.

VINCENT
I'll tell you, man ... 9-ball's not that tough. You know what's tough? Q-Bert.

EDDIE
Q-Bert ...

CARMEN
It's this video game, Vincent's the best at.

VINCENT
Pool ... the balls ... they're just sitting there ... You take your time ... set up the shot ... Q-Bert, that little bastard's moving so fast, right? ... and you got those other guys after him.
(Vincent imitates twirling and punching and pushing knobs and dials)
You got no time to think ... to study ... it's go! go! go! Man versus machine.

Eddie grins.

EDDIE
Can you make any money doing it?

VINCENT
I tell you what I can do off Q-Bert ... Ten years from now I can get into West Point ... it's all coming down to video game reflexes ... computerized tanks? Ten years from now a guy who can score heavy on Q-Bert is a shoo-in at the Point ... Just you wait.

EDDIE
(grins affectionately)
You're beautiful.

VINCENT
You don't believe me?

CARMEN
What do you mean money?

EDDIE
Money-money ...

CARMEN
Really.

EDDIE
Hey, look ... you have an area of excellence, you're the best at something, any thing ... rich can be arranged, rich can come fairly easy.

CARMEN
Really.

EDDIE
Hey, Vince, other than this Q-Bert, do you have an area of excellence?

VINCENT
Nine-ball!
(to Carmen with a squeeze)
Right?

EDDIE
You're some piece of work.

VINCENT
I'm some piece of work.

EDDIE
You're a natural character.

VINCENT
(to Carmen)
I have natural character.

EDDIE
No ... no ... That's not what I said ... you ARE a natural character ... you're an incredible flake ... I'm serious ... It's a gift ... guys work all their lives to develop a character like that ... You go into a pool hall guys nowhere in your League would fight each other to play you ... you're a masterpiece.

Vincent is silent; he doesn't know if he should be insulted or not. Carmen is all ears.

EDDIE (contd)
You got all that but the fact of the matter is, kid, the way you go about things ... you couldn't find big time with a road map.

Eddie pauses to let that sink in.

EDDIE (contd)
Pool excellence is not about ... excellent pool. It's about becoming something.

VINCENT & CARMEN
What ...

EDDIE
A student. You study human moves. All the greats are students of human moves ... to the man.

VINCENT
Student of human moves, hah?

EDDIE
That's MY area of excellence.

VINCENT
(grinning)
Oh yeah?

EDDIE
Human moves. See that guy at the bar with the girl ... ? on the end?

EDDIE'S POV

WE SEE a couple talking at the bar across the room.

EDDIE (contd)
From here, where I sit I say
(Eddie squints, speculating)
they come in separate, he's busting his ass trying to score and he's gonna give it up in
(consulting his watch)
thirty ... thirty-two seconds. You want to bet me a dollar?

Eddie takes off his watch and passes it to Vincent to keep time.

VINCENT
Go.

Vincent is nose-down staring at the second hand. Eddie winks at Carmen. Carmen studies Eddie.

VINCENT (contd)
Ten seconds.

CARMEN
What do you mean "rich can be arranged"?

EDDIE
(shrugs)
I'm just talking ...

VINCENT
Thirty seconds ... thirty-one seconds ... thirty-two seconds, cough it up please!

Eddie casually glances at the bar, peels off a dollar.

EDDIE
Uh ... there he goes.
(the guy leaves)
I'm off a few seconds. You want to up the bet?

VINCENT
Sure.

EDDIE
The check for this meal says I go up there and I leave with her in two minutes.

VINCENT
You got it.

6 INT. STEAKHOUSE-BAR
ANGLE - THE BAR - NIGHT

The woman, Diane, in her thirties, short hair, attractive in a secretary way, sucks her drink through a straw.

She looks at him, nods hello.

EDDIE
Look ... I know this sounds crazy but, ah, come outside. Look at my car for a minute.

DIANE
(hesitating)
Your car?

Eddie rises and gestures for her to come with him. She silently gathers up her stuff and complies.

ANGLE - THE TABLE

Eddie and the woman walk past Vincent and Carmen. Vincent looks awed, Carmen amused. Eddie bends down to Vincent.

EDDIE
Human moves, kid. You study my wristwatch.
(Eddie takes it back)
I study you. You get the check.
(Eddie drops a five dollar bill)
Cab's on me.

7 EXT: PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Eddie and the woman stand outside the restaurant.

DIANE
What's with the car, Eddie?

EDDIE
(shrugs)
Nothing. I'll give you a ride home. You shouldn't be sitting in there alone, Diane, it's depressing.

8 INT: DARKENED BEDROOM - JANELLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Eddie on his back in bed next to Janelle. Eddie looks lost in thought. Janelle examines her nails. Post-coital, Miller Time.

JANELLE
(dryly)
Where'd you go?

EDDIE
What?

JANELLE
You sure weren't here .

EDDIE
(wryly)
I was here ... you kidding me?
The earth moved ... didn't it
move for you?

JANELLE
(fighting a grin)
A little bit.
(beat)
I mean it wasn't like San Juan.
You want to talk earth moving
you talk San Juan. You remember
that water bed we had? Some-
times I think about that week,
Eddie, you know when I'm at the
bar? I say to myself, I'm
buying a water bed, don't tell
Eddie. Make it a surprise.
Make us some rum and pineapple
juice ...

Janelle notices Eddie's lost in thought, not listening.

JANELLE (contd)
(sadly)
You couldn't tell me one thing
I just said to you, could you?

EDDIE
(glassy in thought)
Hah? No ... yeah ... a water
bed would be great.
(coming belatedly
alert)
You remember San Juan?

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9 INT: HI-CUE - NEXT DAY

A liquor delivery is being wheeled through the front door. Various cases topped by two cases of Old MacDonald.

ANGLE - THE HUSTLERS' NICHE

Eddie elbows on knees on the top tier watching Julian play some other guy.

Carmen strolls over. She's without Vincent.

Eddie nods hello.

CARMEN
What did you mean last night
"rich can be arranged"?

EDDIE
(rises)
Come to my office.

10 EXT: PARKING LOT IN FRONT OF HI-CUE - DAY

Eddie digging for his car keys, Carmen walking slightly behind.

They get in the front seat of the car.

11 INT: CAR/EXT: HI-CUE - DAY

EDDIE
Rich can be arranged.

CARMEN
You want Vincent to quit his
job and become a pool hustler?

Carmen and Eddie stare at each other for a long beat.

EDDIE
Smell ...
(waves his hand
palm up)
You smell anything?

CARMEN
Leather?

EDDIE
Six months ago you'd of smelled
leather half a block away ...
when it gets faint like this
it's time to get a new car.

11 CONTD.

Carmen gets in. Eddie turns radio on. Music.

EDDIE (contd)
This car looks very good on you.

CARMEN
This is liquor money?

EDDIE
Some ... And some is human moves money ... I invest. You know what I invest in?

CARMEN
Excellence.

Eddie studies her. He's smiling.

CARMEN (contd)
You think Vincent is that good?

EDDIE
He's got the tools ... He's got the eye ... He's got the flake ... cold. But can he flake on and flake off? ... control ... can you teach that? It's not clear. You gotta learn to be yourself but on purpose. Do you understand?

CARMEN
Yeah, yeah I do.

EDDIE
You like to travel?

CARMEN
Yeah.

EDDIE
You like hotels?

CARMEN
(fighting down her excitement: you have to be cool with Eddie)
Yeah ... They're OK.

EDDIE
You gonna help me with him?

CARMEN
That lady you picked up last night ... you knew her from before, right?

EDDIE
(soberly)
I think you should consider cultivating a less cynical attitude towards people.

CARMEN
(not thrown)
And that guy ... you probably had his schedule down cold ... What ... he works the night shift somewhere? He's your brother-in-law?

EDDIE
(mock serious)
You're a hard broad, you know that? What's Vincent see in you?

CARMEN
Vincent's the best. That's what he sees in me.

EDDIE
(grinning)
I bet you guys have been together since the beginning of time, right?

CARMEN
We been living together about a year ... Vincent made us get a place together. You know how we met? My old boyfriend last year got busted breaking into Vincent's parents' house ... we met at the police station, me and Vincent.

EDDIE
You were bailing him out, your boyfriend?

CARMEN
I got busted too ... I was driving the car. You see this?
(she shows Eddie a medallion on a chain)
This is Vincent's mother's.

EDDIE
He gave that to you?

CARMEN
No. It's from the robbery. Vincent says his mother has one just like it ... Vincent's sweet.

EDDIE
Where is that? Where does Vincent work?

CARMEN
(wincing)
I don't have to go there with you, do I?

12 EXT: TODDLER TOWN - TWO HOURS LATER - DAY

It's a warehouse sized store on a miracle mile stretch. On the roof is a giant rotating plaster baby.

13 INT: TODDLER TOWN - DAY

It's a cavernous acre of cribs, bibs, toys, playpens, etc.

Working the floor are Vincent and four co-workers; each wearing a black T-shirt with his name ironed on the chest (Frank, Tom, Vince, Lou).

Eddie cruises the room.

EDDIE'S POV

Vincent is pitching to a young couple. He holds a baby harness, straps and clamps trailing to the floor in each hand.

VINCENT
(holding up one harness)
The problem with this one is ... it's made in Taiwan ...
(Vincent shrugs)
You want something for your kid to bounce in? What country comes to mind. Bounce ... think bounce ... what animal bounces?

YOUNG GUY
Kangaroo?

VINCENT
Who lives where?

YOUNG GIRL
Australia.

VINCENT
Bingo ... This is the Bounceroo.
(holding up the other harness)
... Australian made ... I'll be perfectly honest with you, twice as expensive as Taiwan, here ... and on top of that it's three times the goods. Plus, I'll throw you fifteen percent off.

They nod OK. Vincent spies Eddie.

VINCENT (contd)
Tommy! Write 'em up ... 15% off. Tommy'll take care of you ... he's a good man.
(to Eddie)
Hey! What're _you_ doing here, Mr. Felson?

EDDIE
(Would you please) ... uh ... Eddie, please.

VINCENT
Yes, sir. Eddie.

EDDIE
Carmen told me where you work.
(to young couple)
That was nice.

VINCENT
Thank you. It _is_ better stuff. If you believe ... they believe.

EDDIE
Me and you ... where we can talk private?

14 INT: DOLL DEPARTMENT (OR VENDING MACHINES) - DAY

Vincent and Eddie stand in either a narrow aisle flanked by towering shelves of dolls which stare at them, or a refreshment area. Vincent eats a candy bar. Eddie eats bag of Planter's peanuts.

EDDIE
Listen up ... there's a nine-ball tournament end of May in Atlantic City. There's gonna be a lot of action ... We should go.

VINCENT
(flipping a doll like it's a baseball)
We?

EDDIE
Me, you and Carmen.

VINCENT
That sounds like fun.

EDDIE
Now the best part is that we oughta leave tomorrow.

VINCENT
(joking)
Tomorrow?! Hell, why wait? Why don't we go now?

EDDIE
Yeah, we could do that. Hey, if you're gonna take the plunge, give yourself a fair shake. You do this half-assed then nobody's gonna do any good. Go on the road ... six weeks ... get some seasoning ... put together some stuff.

VINCENT
(backing off)
Why don't you take Julian? He'd be into that, right?

EDDIE
Julian's a face ... he's known. You're nobody ... I'll get better bets down with you ... if I can be more honest about this you have to tell me how.

VINCENT
C'mon, Eddie, this is my job.

EDDIE

VINCENT
What is?

EDDIE
(deep exhale)
You love Carmen?

VINCENT
(cautious)
Sure.

EDDIE
Crazy about her, right?

VINCENT
(embarrassed)
This is a little personal, here.

Eddie just stares at him seriously.

VINCENT (contd)
(wary)
What ...

EDDIE
You're losing her kid.

VINCENT
What do you mean?

EDDIE
(no sarcasm)
She don't see the allure of this place.

TOMMY
(leaning into the aisle)
Hey, Vincent!

VINCENT
(to Tommy, with irritation)
Wait ...
(to Eddie)
What?

EDDIE
You ever take a good look at her?
(shrugs)
She's starting to pack.

Vincent stares at him.

VINCENT
You don't know her.

EDDIE
I didn't know that lady at the bar last night either ... She's bored, Vincent. Do you follow me?

TOMMY
Vincent!

Vincent ignores Tommy.

VINCENT
So what are you sayin'?

EDDIE
All I'm saying is, me, you and her, six weeks on the road ... she'll be a couple of years catching her breath.

TOMMY
Vincent! ... these people got a babysitter. Time is money, hah?

VINCENT
Hey, Tommy! Write it up yourself! Can't you see I'm talkin' here!

EDDIE
Take some time. You should think about all of this. Everything I'm saying. You know where I am. Come and talk to me.

Vincent, frazzled, pulls his eyes away from Eddie and walks down the canyon of dolls.

EDDIE (contd)
And Vincent, listen ...

Vincent turns.

EDDIE (contd)
(fucking with Vincent's head)
... don't worry about it.

15 INT: HI-CUE - BAR AREA - NIGHT
EDDIE AND JANELLE

Janelle brings a bottle of JSW Brown over to Eddie.

Eddie holds up his hand in a don't pour gesture.

EDDIE
You know there's this island in the Bahamas ... Green Turtle Cay ... They make this drink down there called a Bahama Breeze.

JANELLE
Yeah?

EDDIE
I think ... me and you ... as beverage service professionals, we should investigate that island soon.

JANELLE
(smiling)
A fact finding tour?

EDDIE
Uh-huh. With a two-hour lay-over in San Juan.

EDDIE'S POV

WE SEE Vincent enter with Carmen.

Eddie looks at Janelle and nods in the direction of a back office.

16 INT: HI-CUE - SMALL BACK OFFICE - NIGHT

Eddie stands by filing cabinets behind a desk. The office is cluttered with papers, boxes and liquor cases ("Remy Martin" etc.)

Vincent knocks, tentatively enters.

VINCENT
Hi, Eddie? ... What we were talkin' 'bout yesterday? I wanted to ask you some more questions ...

EDDIE
(cuts Vincent off halfway through above line)
Here, I got something to show you. Take a look at this.

Eddie hands a beautiful velvet cue case to Vincent. Vincent opens it. WE SEE cue stick in two pieces resting in blue velvet.

VINCENT
God Damn!

EDDIE
A Balabushka.

VINCENT
This makes the others look like a stickball bat. Is this yours?

EDDIE
You want it?

VINCENT
Aw, no way ... This isn't for me -- this is for ... for ... I don't know who this is for! John Wayne, if he played pool, would carry this ... Babe Ruth would carry this.

EDDIE
G'head ... take it.

VINCENT
You're pushin' pretty hard.

EDDIE
Yes I am. I've been thinking about nothing else all day.

VINCENT
I don't know what to tell you, Eddie.

EDDIE
Whatever ... doesn't matter ... try it. You don't like it? Bring it back.

VINCENT
OK.
(hesitates)
You know, Eddie, I was talking to Carmen? Feeling her out? I think you're wrong, man. She's doing good ... real good.

EDDIE
(gracious)
Good ... glad I'm wrong ...

Vincent hesitates.

17 INT: HI-CUE - POOL ROOM - NIGHT

Vincent walks out past Carmen and the young hustlers. Everyone spies the case. No one says anything about it though.

ANGLE

Eddie exits from the office, watches Vincent from across the room. He stands near Carmen.

CARMEN
What's happening?

EDDIE
(eyes on Vincent, sighing)
That boyfriend of yours ... I dunno.
(looks at Carmen)
I need a little push here.

ANGLE

Vincent stands over a pool table. The two parts of the stick are separated in his hands.

VINCENT'S POV

WE SEE the hustlers' niche. Carmen's not there.

Vincent leaves the stick on the table and walks over to Janelle at the bar. Pulls potato chips off a clip-rack, drops a quarter on the counter. Surveys the room. Still no Carmen.

Julian walks over to the bar. Vincent tears open the chips.

VINCENT
You see my girlfriend?

JULIAN
She went out.

VINCENT
Out where?

JULIAN
Hey, she's _your_ girlfriend, man.

Carmen enters the room tapping a fresh pack of cigarettes against the back of her hand.

VINCENT
Everything OK?

CARMEN
(shrugging)
Yeah.

VINCENT
Where'd you go?

CARMEN
I went to get cigs.

VINCENT
They sell cigarettes here.

CARMEN
So I got 'em across the street, so what.

VINCENT
What, you mean, you wanted to get some fresh air?

CARMEN
Fresh air? There's ninety thousand cars out there.
(beat)
What is your problem?

VINCENT
No problem ... no problem.

CARMEN
(looking at him screwy)
Glad to hear it.

VINCENT
I just didn't know where you went ... I was looking for you.

CARMEN
I'm gonna sit down now, OK?

VINCENT
Great.

CARMEN
I might go to the bathroom in about ten-twenty minutes.

VINCENT
OK.

CARMEN
I'll come and tell you when, OK?

VINCENT
Hey ... I just didn't know where you went ... Let's not make a federal production out of it, OK?

CARMEN
OK.

VINCENT
Good.

Vincent returns to the empty table, screws the stick together and powers a monstrous break. He studies the spread. Can't concentrate. Puts down the stick and strides over to Eddie.

VINCENT (contd)
Let's do it.

CLOSE UP - CARMEN

casually looking across the room to Eddie.

Eddie catches her glance, nods, looks away.

18 INT: JC PENNEY PACKERS - TWO HOURS LATER - NIGHT

Restaurant-bar; fake Tiffany lamps, mock Victorian, hanging plants type lounge. Sporty joint; lots of hitters, Sinatra jukebox.

Eddie and Janelle are dancing. Fox-trot.

JANELLE
So this one island they got down there I never got out of the airport. We land I gotta go to the john, I walk into the men's room by mistake and I see these urinals screwed up on the wall here -- eye level. I said, Jesus Christ, what do they breed out here, giants? I mean, I know how much I can handle ...

They go back to the bar. Chuck the bartender pours them drinks without asking.

JANELLE (contd)
So I just grabbed the next plane out ...

EDDIE
(to Chuck)
How's that Old MacDonald working out?

CHUCK
You're drinking it now.

EDDIE
(Startled)
You serious?
(shrugs)
Good stuff.

Julian, who's been having a drink at the other end of the bar with some girl, makes his way to Eddie.

JULIAN
(high on coke)
Yo, Eddie, my man.
(to Janelle)
Hey ...

EDDIE
(staring hard at him)
You should look in the mirror before you leave the john, Julian.

JULIAN
(as Eddie drinks)
Better than that shit.

Eddie is disgusted. He hates drugs.

JULIAN (contd)
Listen, you gonna be around Monday? There's a guy I got set up in Camden.

EDDIE
I'm gonna be out of town for a few weeks on business.

Janelle looks alarmed.

JULIAN
Bullshit ... What ... you gonna take that guy on the road? What's his name?

EDDIE
I don't know his name ... And it's none of your business.

JULIAN
(coke rap)
That guy's a chump. What he do, beat me one night? I put the nine ball up both your asses. Are you serious? Takin' him on the road. When was the last time you did the road? Nineteen sixty? They didn't even have cars then. What, you banging his girlfriend?

Janelle looks away, smiling.

EDDIE
(stares at him for a beat, as if contemplating smacking him down, then smiles)
You're the best, Julian.

JULIAN
Let me play him again tonight ... Winner gets in the car with you.

Janelle exits. Eddie doesn't see this.

EDDIE
I said you're the best, Julian.

JULIAN
Hey, Eddie, you're not the only stakehorse around, you know that?

18 CONTD

EDDIE
I'll see you in Atlantic City, Julian.

JULIAN
Don't look too hard for me, OK?

Julian exits. Eddie turns to see Janelle has gone. He exits.

19 INT: J.C. PENNEY PACKERS - CLOAKROOM LOBBY - NIGHT

Eddie catches Janelle putting on her coat.

EDDIE
Hey, we're goin' to the Bahamas. I just didn't say when.

JANELLE
This "road" trip. I appreciate hearing about it from that dope fiend. It really makes me feel high on your intimacy list.

Julian abruptly shows up.

JULIAN
That guy sucks, man ... and so do you!

Julian exits.

EDDIE
(to Janelle)
Listen ...

JANELLE
(rising, cold)
You got anything you need at my place I'll leave it in a suitcase out front.
(she splits)

EDDIE
Wait a minute ... hey ... shit ...

20 INT: CARMEN AND VINCENT'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eddie stands against a wall studying the two-room tatty layout (neat but filled with thrown together pickup furniture; improvised) as Carmen and Vincent do last minute packing.

EDDIE
... I cover all expenses, rooms, food, everything. I cover the entry fee, everything. For that ... I get sixty percent of everything you win ... all bets ... I lay the bets so I also take the losses if you lose, but I take the sixty when you win.

CARMEN
Sixty percent? What are you, a slum lord?

EDDIE
You find a newcomer's got a better deal -- let me know and we'll talk.

VINCENT
Hey, I'm not gonna lose often.

EDDIE
Yeah you will. I'll teach you ... sometimes if you lose you win.

21 EXT: CARMEN AND VINCENT'S APARTMENT - DAY

They walk down wooden staircase at rear of Vincent's house. They walk towards Eddie's car.

CARMEN
Who's the heaviest guy?

VINCENT
What are you asking that for. I'm the heaviest, right?

EDDIE
(dismissing the question)
It goes in streaks ... The balls roll funny for everybody ... There's a kid, Grady Seasons ... he's makin' the most money straight up on paper but that doesn't mean anything ... the real money's in the practice room ... that's where we'll get you some good games ... A guy can get wiped out on the first day of the tournament, hang around the practice room for a few days, make more money than the guy who won.

VINCENT
(gung ho)
... the practice room!

22 INT: ROADSIDE RESTAURANT - DAY

A waitress puts down food in front of them. Carmen studies her balefully.

CARMEN
(correcting the waitress)
That was 3 on the side, not 4. Jesus!

EDDIE
Where did you work?

VINCENT
She was a killer waitress over at the Acropolis. She just quit yesterday.

Eddie looks surprised.

CARMEN
What do you think, Vincent's the only one who has to work?

EDDIE
(embarrassed -- he never thought of this)
No ... I just ...

VINCENT
How come you don't play anymore?

EDDIE
I quit ... actually, somebody retired me. Sometimes you get hooked up with the wrong people, you know? That was a long time ago ... back East. It's dead and buried ... I don't even remember ... what the hell, you look it up, in the history books, I won more'n my share of medals.

VINCENT
You ever feel like pickin' it up again?

EDDIE
Now? ... Nah ... I'm too old ... my wheels are shot, it's a grind standing up there hours a guy like me, plus my eyes are less than they were ... it's a young man's game. Besides, there's drugs now ... kids playing on speed, coke ... I dunno, when I was younger ... it was booze, it was more human.

VINCENT
Yeah, huh?

EDDIE
I'm serious. Booze goes back to the Bible ... wine. The Bible never said nothing about amphetamines.

VINCENT
You religious, Eddie?

EDDIE
Me? I get high on the man upstairs.

VINCENT
(without malice)
Is there a masters' tournament you can play in? An old-timers' game?

CARMEN
If you're too old to cut the mustard you can still lick the jar, right?

EDDIE
(long beat)
Right.

23 EXT: HIGHWAY/INT: CAR - DAY

EDDIE
Look ... we're talking *around* something here. If you *haven't* figured this out yet, it ain't about *pool*, it ain't about *sex*, it ain't about *love*. It's about *money*. The *best* is the guy with the most. That's the *whole* show. The best is the guy with the most ... in *all* walks of life.

CARMEN
Are you the best liquor salesman?

EDDIE
(beat)
Yeah ... you bet your sweet ass I am.

Eddie taps his dashboard as if the Cadillac signifies his success.

24 EXT: DOWNTOWN JERSEY CITY - DAY

The three of them stand across the street from a narrow walk-up entrance squeezed between two modern storefronts.

EDDIE
This place is an all-time classic.

Eddie notices Vincent has the Balabushka under his arm.

EDDIE (contd)
Oh no ... put that in the trunk.

VINCENT
What am I gonna play with?

EDDIE
You play with a house cue for now ... you walk in with that nobody'd go near you with a nickel.

25 EXT: NARROW ENTRANCE - DAY
ANGLE - THE THREE OF THEM

file into the narrow stairway facing a steep flight of stairs.

EDDIE
(puts out his arm for Carmen to touch)
Feel ... goosebumps ... I love this.

They start trudging up the stairs.

26 INT: ENTRANCEWAY AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS - DAY

EDDIE
We're just gonna sit and watch for a while. I have to find this guy.

Eddie pushes inside.

26 CONTD

The three of them stand in shock, staring out at a sea of piled carpets and rugs. It's a carpet clearance outlet.

27 EXT: STREET - DAY

Eddie walking back to the car faster than Carmen and Vincent who trot to keep up. Eddie looks like he just got smacked in the back of the head with a bag of nickels.

VINCENT
(wryly)
Sixty percent, hah?

EDDIE
Just get in.

Carmen and Vincent pile into the car after Eddie. Eddie peels rubber.

28 INT: CRANDALL'S BAR - ONE HOUR LATER - DAY
CLOSE UP - TOM

An old guy with a voice vibrator stuck in his trachea, sinking the nine on a coin op table. His friends cheer.

Vincent hands over twenty.

TOM
You had enough, junior?

VINCENT
Hold on.

Vincent approaches Eddie and Carmen at the bar.

EDDIE
What the hell you doing, Vincent, for Chris' sakes, beat him, eat him and get out.

VINCENT
(wincing)
I know, I know ... I can't take this guy's money. This guy's breaking my heart, man. What's it so far, sixty bucks? No big deal.

EDDIE
No big deal?

VINCENT
You want me to quit?

EDDIE
Yeah, I want you to quit if you're just gonna keep dumping.

VINCENT
(pleading)
Eddie, man ...

EDDIE
Unless
(beat)
... Show me ... you wanna dump? Fine ... go ahead ... But I want a real performance. You show me you know how to dump like a pro it'll be worth it.

VINCENT
Let's go, chief. I'll play you for thirty!

CARMEN
That's eighty bucks.

EDDIE
(nodding)
OK.
(handing her the keys)
Go out to the car ... pull it up to the front.

CARMEN
You, what are you doin'?

EDDIE
Do what I say.

Carmen splits.

TOMMY
Let's do it.

Eddie eases off the stool and saunters out of the bar unnoticed.

29 EXT: OUTSIDE FRONT WALL OF CRANDALL'S BAR - DAY

Eddie leans against the wall smoking a cigarette. Carmen sits in the car, engine humming.

Eddie sneaks a peek inside.

30 INT: CRANDALL'S BAR - DAY
EDDIE'S POV

Vincent flings a hand in exasperated self-disgust at a blown shot.'

Tom cackles electronically.

31 EXT: CRANDALL'S BAR - DAY

Eddie ditches his cigarette, he's tensed, waiting, winks at Carmen, turns again to peek inside.

32 INT: CRANDALL'S BAR - DAY
EDDIE'S POV

TOM
(menacing)
Where's the money, kid?

Vincent searching the bar bewildered.

VINCENT
Eddie ... He must've gone out for a second.

Vincent takes two quick steps away from the table.

TOM
Where's the money, ya little prick!

33 EXT: CRANDALL'S BAR - DAY

Eddie quickly turns away, wincing.

CLOSE UP - EDDIE

We hear the sound of Vincent getting whacked with the cue, a fist landing, an exhalation of breath, scuffling feet.

Carmen charges towards the door. Eddie holds her back.

EDDIE
(angry)
I know what I'm doing! Get back in the car!

We hear the continuing cursing and violence inside.

Carmen backs off. Eddie waits another beat then barrels inside.

34 INT: CRANDALL'S BAR - DAY

Eddie strides forward separating two guys from Vincent's face; ignores the guys, grabs Vincent by the shirt front yanking him to his feet and starts screaming at him.

EDDIE
You stupid little bastard ...
what'd I tell you.

There's a chorus of angry "fuck offs" and "beat its" to Eddie.

EDDIE (contd)
(enraged)
I'm his father!
(to Vincent)
And I tell you not to play? ...
or to play?

Another guy puts his hand on Eddie, Eddie whips around.

EDDIE (contd)
Hey! Back off! This is
family!

Eddie starts Vincent out of the bar by the scruff of his neck. They walk through a gauntlet of hostile but dis-oriented men.

EDDIE (contd)
You think this was bad in here!
You know what's gonna be at
home?

Vincent suddenly hisses in pain and jerks to one side. Someone just took a cheap shot to his ribs. Eddie distractedly pushes Vincent to the door.

Eddie stares at the guy, nose to nose. We don't see what Eddie does, but suddenly, the guy drops to his knees, his presence obscured from our view by Eddie's back.

EDDIE (contd)
He had enough.

35 EXT: FRONT OF THE BAR/ INT: CADILLAC - DAY

Vincent's already in the back seat. Eddie slides in next to him.

EDDIE
(to Carmen)
Get out of here ... go ...

35 CONTD

Vincent is dazed and shaken. Carmen peels out as men come to the door of the bar.

36 EXT: ROAD/INT: CADILLAC - DAY

EDDIE (contd)
The nerve of that bastard ...

VINCENT
What happened!

EDDIE
(amused)
What happened?

Vincent, still dazed, sits in silence.

CARMEN
Where to ...

EDDIE
Pick up the Parkway South ...
you know how to get to ... ?

CARMEN
No problem.

EDDIE
(to Vincent)
Let me see your face.

He touches Vincent's chin. Vincent snaps his head away.

EDDIE (contd)
You never ... I mean never
ease off on a guy like that.
Not when there's money. Never.
(beat)
The problem with mercy, Vincent,
is that it's not professional.

Vincent doesn't react.

EDDIE (contd)
You'll live.

Eddie stares at him, a small smile playing on his lips.

EDDIE (contd)
You're gonna live, right?

VINCENT
Get outa my face.

Long beat.

VINCENT (contd)
My father.

EDDIE
(grinning)
Saved your ass.

Long beat.

EDDIE (contd)
Carmen ...

CARMEN
What ...

EDDIE
What are we talking about?

CARMEN
(beat)
Nice guys finish last?

VINCENT
Is that original or did you just make that up?

CARMEN
You look sexy with that bloody lip.

VINCENT
(blushing)
Yeah, right.

CARMEN
I'm serious.

EDDIE
(playing Cupid)
You want me to drive?

CARMEN
I'm good.

EDDIE
(to Vincent, after a beat)
You're a good kid.

VINCENT
(to himself)
Goddamn slime-ass sonofabitch ...

36 CONT'D

EDDIE
(uptight and defensive)
Hey ...

VINCENT
Shove that throat pipe out the back of his goddamn head ... come back with a cannon.

EDDIE
(relieved)
Next time, kid.

VINCENT
What you do to that guy?

EDDIE
(mock innocent)
What guy?

Carmen looks at Eddie via the rear view mirror.

37 EXT: STREET - DUSK

A one-way street so driver's side of car is near curb. Caddy pulls up to three guys on a street corner.

EDDIE
Where's the Triumph Motel?

GUY #1
Left on Auraura right on Seneca.

EDDIE
Is Chalkie's still around?

GUY #2
Chalkie's?

EDDIE
The pool hall.

GUY #2
(feisty)
I know what it is. Yeah, it's still around. It's supposed to go somewheres?

Eddie's face relaxes.

EDDIE
Some things never change, hah?

GUY #3

38 INT: VINCENT AND CARMEN'S ROOM - NEXT DAY 44

Two double beds. Vincent is sitting on one of the beds. He's on the phone. The TV on its swivel base is blasting out the weather. Vincent has changed into his black "Vince" T-shirt. Eddie's Balabushka is enshrined -- open -- atop the TV.

As Eddie enters, Carmen goes into the bathroom, turns on the shower and starts to strip. Eddie can see her in the full-length mirror on the ajar bathroom door. The mirror is rapidly misting over but it's a jaw-on-the-floor show. Eddie is totally thrown.

VINCENT
I'm getting room service, you want anything?

EDDIE
(struggling not to stare at the mirror)
Room service?

Eddie takes the phone out of Vincent's hand and lays it down in the receiver.

Vincent notices Eddie's gaze straying towards the bathroom. Eddie covers for himself.

EDDIE (contd)
I hate the weather.

Eddie turns off the TV as if that was the source of his distraction.

EDDIE (contd)
Motels don't have room service.
C'mon ... let's check out
Chalkie's ... tell your girl-
friend there to speed it up.
I'll wait in the lobby.

Just as he leaves, Carmen, nude, stares at him via the mirror before she steps in the shower.

39 INT: MOTEL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Eddie leaving Vincent's room. The TV immediately goes back on. Eddie stands there, eyelids fluttering a little, stunned by the mirror action.

EDDIE
(to the door)
Vincent?

VINCENT (OS)
(yelling)
Yeah!

EDDIE
Don't change that shirt ... it's a nice touch.

VINCENT (OS)
My shirt?

EDDIE
And leave that cue stick.

40 EXT: STREET WITH ENTRANCE TO CHALKIE'S - AFTERNOON

Eddie and the kids check out the street. It's heavy; low income tough.

EDDIE
(awed)
This used to be a nice average bad neighborhood ... Look at this!

41 INT: CHALKIE'S - AFTERNOON

Spacious, old time. Pressed tin ceiling. Thirty tables. Loud music. Homemade tattoo arms. Goatees. Young male prison yard types with a sprinkling of old-timers.

Eddie and the kids enter as a man leaves.

EDDIE
(to man)
How do we get a table here?

MAN
Guy over there — with the red shirt.

An old black guy, Orvis, stands nearby.

EDDIE
Can we get a back table?

ORVIS
Table fifteen fo' Mister Fast Eddie.

Eddie does a double take.

ORVIS (contd)
Yeah, see, he don't recognize Mr. Orvis from way back when.

EDDIE
Orvis?
(Eddie extends a hand)
What are you goin' here!

ORVIS
Now he starting to remember.
How long you want it for?

EDDIE
A couple of hours. Last time
I saw you, you were sweeping up
at McGurrs ...

As Orvis talks, they walk to the cage.

ORVIS
Sweeping up at McGurrs ... that's
right ... then be sweeping up at
Chalkie's ... then be running
Chalkie's when Chalkie's sells
cause he's scared of the bad
element takin' over ... now what
can I be doing for you ... you
lookin' for some action ...
Usually I steer for twenty per-
cent but I'll do you for ten ...
Now the table will cost you
twelve dollars.

EDDIE
Me? Nah ... I think my friend
here is looking for a game.

VINCENT
How ya doin'?

Orvis, startled, doesn't answer.

VINCENT (contd)
(awkward at the
silence)
This place is wild.

ORVIS
(ignoring Vincent)
What you doin', Eddie? Stake-
horsin'?
(to Vincent)
You know who you got here
stakehorsin' for you? This
Fast Eddie Felson. Who the
hell are you, the End of the
World?

EDDIE
Give it a rest, Orvis.

Carmen exits.

ORVIS
Yeah, OK ... him I steer for fifteen since he staked by Fast Eddie the Stakehorse.

Vincent follows her.

EDDIE
(embarrassed)
Fine ... fair enough.

42 INT: CHALKIE'S - AFTERNOON
ANGLE

Vincent and Carmen check out the room.

VINCENT
Maybe you should go back to the motel.

CARMEN
Why?

VINCENT
Why? What, are you kidding me? There's probably two dozen rape artists here.

CARMEN
Maybe you should go back to the motel.

VINCENT
Me?

CARMEN
Pretty boy like you.

VINCENT
(blushing)
Cut it out.

CARMEN
Cute boy like you.

VINCENT
(laughing, disarmed)
I'm serious.

CARMEN
Cute boy.

Eddie comes up behind them and steers them to a bench.

EDDIE
Awright, killer, here's the scoop ... you see that guy over there? With the tie pin in his nose?

EDDIE'S POV

A huge Leon Spinks type complete with tiny cowboy hat which makes him look even bigger.

EDDIE
That's Moselle ... Him we stay away from.

VINCENT
No shit.

EDDIE
Grow up ... him we stay away from because he's the main stick around here ... you beat him you scare away that gentleman over there.

EDDIE'S POV

WE SEE EARL, fifty, fat, white mutton chops and a conservative suit. He's also wearing a skipper's cap a la Count Basie.

EDDIE
That's Earl ... he comes in here, he's got five-six thousand in his pockets.

VINCENT
Jesus!

EDDIE
Yeah ... he runs the numbers. Orvis says he doesn't mind losing his money but he don't give it away ... beat Moselle and old Earl there loses interest.

VINCENT
So what happens now?

EDDIE
Nothin' for a while ... he's gonna be watching you play ... but you're gonna be playing over here.
(Eddie raises his hand and makes a wavering gesture implying 3/4 speed)
He'll come to you.

VINCENT
Who'm I gonna play?

EDDIE
(pausing, nervous)
Me.

VINCENT
You? Wait ... one thing ...

EDDIE
What.

VINCENT
I want her to go back to the motel.

CARMEN
Oh Christ ...

VINCENT
I don't like her here ... this is goddamn Birdland.

CARMEN
I been worse places ... I dated worse guys.

VINCENT
(upset)
Who!

EDDIE
Carmen ... Carmen ... tell Orvis to call you a cab.

VINCENT
Who!

EDDIE
(nodding, implying she's working against things now)
Carmen ...

43 INT: CHALKIE'S DUSK
ANGLE - POOL TABLE

The balls are already set up on the table.

Eddie and Vincent rolling cues on the table, testing for warp.

EDDIE
No thunderbolt breaks, OK? No runs over four balls. Just play it nice and easy.

VINCENT
She never went out with anybody like these guys.

EDDIE
Vincent ... pay attention 'cause that guy Earl's gonna be paying attention ... you hear what I said?

VINCENT
Yeah ... yeah ... you want to break?

EDDIE
Let me break.

Eddie seems tense. He draws a bead, stands up, hunches down, stands up.

EDDIE (contd)
(grabbing his back)
What they do, saw down the legs? This is a dwarfs' table.

VINCENT
C'mon, c'mon, no excuses ... I wanna see some heavy legend action here.

EDDIE
(hunching down to break)
I swear I see thirty-five balls.

Eddie slams into pack, drops three.

EDDIE (contd)
Yeah ... not bad, huh? Ah ... this ain't pool. This is for
(MORE)

EDDIE (contd)
bangers. Straight pool's pool. This is like handball ... it's like cribbage, or something.

Eddie starts to work the table.

EDDIE (contd)
Straight pool, a guy had to be a surgeon to get over. It was all finesse. Now everything's 9-ball because it's fast. Good for TV. Big loud break shot. What the hell, checkers sells more than chess I guess, hah?

Eddie runs the table. Despite his contempt for the game, he's glowing, excited.

EDDIE (contd)
Not bad for a blind man, hah? Rack 'em up.

VINCENT
Yes suh, boss.

Eddie fast shrugs his shoulders, working out kinks.

EDDIE
See what I mean? I haven't played serious pool in twenty odd years ... right off the bat I'm laying waste ... watch this ... nine on the break.

Eddie breaks, wide spread, but nothing goes on.

Eddie shrugs it off ... it happens.

VINCENT
(studying the lay)
Eddie, that was phenomenal ...

EDDIE
I'd like to play that big dude Moselle. I bet you he ain't that good.

VINCENT
(not listening now, sinking the nine)
You know, Eddie, maybe you're right ... maybe this is just for bangers.

44 ANGLE - SECOND GAME
CLOSE UP - EDDIE

hardened face.

Vincent sinking the nine.

VINCENT (OS)
But the thing is ... even if it's just for bangers ... everybody's doin' it.

45 ANGLE - THIRD GAME

Vincent sinking the nine, looking up at Eddie.

CLOSE UP - EDDIE

tight and angry.

VINCENT
If everybody's doing it, that's a lot of guys doing it.

46 ANGLE - TABLE

Vincent lining up a combo on the nine.

CLOSE UP

EDDIE
(hissing low)
Dog it, hot shot.

VINCENT
A lot of guys doin' it.
(sinks the nine)
Only one guy can be the best.

Eddie walks away from the table, looking like he could kill. He replaces the cue stick in the wall rack and marches out.

VINCENT (contd)
Where you goin'?

47 EXT: FRONT OF CHALKIE'S - NIGHT

Eddie's in the car. Vincent trots out.

VINCENT
What ... those were easy plays, man ...
(MORE)

VINCENT (contd)
(shifting gears)
Eddie ... I'm sorry I'm a smart ass ... I was showing off ... I'm sorry.

EDDIE
You know what this is turning out to be?

VINCENT
What.

EDDIE
A waste of my time ... and a waste of my money.

Vincent reaches for the door handle. Eddie drives off.

48 INT: EDDIE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie lying on his bed staring at the ceiling, lost in thought.

Rises, looks out the window at the trucks going by on highway -- a stream of headlights.

EDDIE
(hissing)
Child care.

49 INT: MOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eddie knocking on the other door.

EDDIE
Vincent?

The door swings open. Carmen is standing in her underwear. Behind her the TV is on and the bed is rumpled.

Carmen returns to lying on the bed watching a movie.

Eddie stands there in the middle of the room, embarrassed again.

EDDIE
Vincent back?

CARMEN
(not moving)
Yeah, but he's out.

EDDIE
What do you mean "out"?

CARMEN
Out ... like, not in the room ...

EDDIE
You mind getting dressed?

CARMEN
Are we going somewheres?

EDDIE
A guy walks into a room ...
what if I was somebody else?

CARMEN
Like who?

EDDIE
That's not the point.

CARMEN
I'm not naked or anything.

EDDIE
(uptight, covering it
with officiousness)
And another thing ... work with
me, not against me ... don't go
saying to Vincent stuff like you
said in Chalkie's ... you get him
all upset ... if you're gonna use
that thing, use it right.

CARMEN
(fake innocent,
breaking his balls)
Use what thing?

Eddie doesn't answer, he looks lost in thought. Abruptly locks the door then steps forward, grabs Carmen's wrist.

CARMEN (contd)
(shocked)
What are you doin'!

EDDIE
(brusque)
C'mon ... me and you ...

CARMEN

EDDIE
(scarey)
I like doin' it in the shower ... a fast one before Vincent gets back ... let's go.

Carmen pulls her hand away. She's freaked and scared.

Eddie sits on the edge of the bed. The sexual threat evaporates. Suddenly he's all business. The come-on was a put-on.

EDDIE (contd)
Hey ... I ain't your daddy, I ain't your boyfriend so don't you be playing games with me, kid ... I'm your partner ... You don't come on to me, you don't flirt with me ... You take a shower ... You close the damn door.

CARMEN
(humiliated, holding up a shred of pride)
Don't flatter yourself.

EDDIE
(cutting through her pose)
Don't waste my time with bullshit, Carmen.

There's an awkward beat, Eddie realizes Carmen's totally shamed.

EDDIE (contd)
(gently)
Look ... me and you ... we got a race horse here ... a thorough-bred. You make it feel good and I teach it to run ... do you understand me? We're business people.

CARMEN
(still shaken)
Gotcha.

EDDIE
(trying to make light)
Besides I'm old enough to be your relative.

Eddie smiles at her, lets his eyes stray around the room.

EDDIE (contd)
(alarmed)
Where's the Balabushka?

CARMEN
Vincent took it.

EDDIE
You said he was out.

CARMEN
Yeah! He was in, he was out.

EDDIE
And he took the cue stick?

CARMEN
Uh-huh ...

EDDIE
And you let him?

CARMEN
So what.
(dawning realization)
Shit.

EDDIE
(leaving quickly)
Goddamn child care.

50 INT: CHALKIE'S - NIGHT
CLOSE UP - MOSELLE

stretched across the table for a shot.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Vincent watching the game sitting on a high chair ... the cue case under his arm.

Moselle makes a difficult shot, a two cushion job.

The guy he's playing curses and passes him a twenty.

VINCENT
Nice shot.

MOSELLE
(nodding towards
the case)
What you got in there?

VINCENT
(grinning)
Docm.

51 EXT: HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Eddie's Caddy flying down the road.

52 INT: CHALKIE'S - NIGHT

Moselle is playing Vincent. James Brown is playing over the P.A.

There's a major mob watching the game.

Vincent is dancing to the music around the table, dipping to the felt to make shots, dancing to the next set-up, making that. It's a massacre.

53 INT: ENTRANCE TO CHALKIE'S - NIGHT
ANGLE

Eddie strides towards the cage. Orvis looks at him sadly, shrugs and nods to a mob around a table.

CLOSE UP - EDDIE

pissed.

EDDIE'S POV

WE SEE Earl watching the game, impassive. The crowd reacts as Vincent makes a shot. Earl snorts, shaking his head.

ORVIS
(casually, elbows on the cage counter)
Fast Eddie the Stakehorse.

EDDIE
Up your ass, Orvis.

EARL
(walking past them)
That boy is hot!

Eddie makes eye contact with Vincent. Vincent waves, raises the Balabushka and kisses it, turns to the game and sinks the nine ball.

EDDIE
Shit.

ORVIS
Eddie ...

EDDIE
What.

ORVIS
When you finish fuckin' up with that boy ... you come on back here, by yourself.

EDDIE
Fat chance.

Eddie leaves.

ANGLE - MOSELLE

handing a wrinkled twenty to Vincent.

The crowd has no hard feelings. Vincent has put on a spectacular show.

MOSELLE
(slapping Vincent's palm)
That's it, mah man ... When you leavin' town, right now?

54 EXT: CHALKIE'S STREET - NIGHT

Eddie is standing up against the Caddy. Vincent exits, still dancing.

VINCENT
(eyes glistening, almost shouting)
Did you see me tonight, or what!

Eddie grabs the cue case from under Vincent's elbow and, grunting, flings it down the street.

Vincent, shocked, laughs. Eddie just glares at him.

VINCENT
What! I made money!

EDDIE
You lost money! This town is dead for you now ... what is the matter with you? Am I not speaking your native language? What is it?

VINCENT
(incredulous and angry)
You give me that stick and you want me to lay low? That goddamn
(MORE)

VINCENT (contd)
thing. You put it down, it jumps at you, man! Are you kidding me?

EDDIE
You don't deserve that stick!

VINCENT
(retrieving the case; calmly)
No ... you don't deserve that stick, man. I'm a fucking pool player ...

Vincent starts briskly walking backwards on the road, thumb out for a ride.

VINCENT (contd)
(shouting)
I'm a fucking an-imal!

He beats on his chest with one hand like an ape while holding the cue case high.

Still holding the cue case overhead, he turns his back to Eddie and marches down the road, thumb out. Exploding with righteous energy, he's a walking celebration of himself.

CLOSE UP - EDDIE

staring at him through the windshield. Eddie looks tired.

ANGLE - EDDIE

driving the car at a crawl alongside Vincent.

EDDIE
Vincent, get in the car.

VINCENT
No.

EDDIE
C'mon, Vincent, this is embarrassing. You're acting like some girl got felt up in a drive-in. This looks terrible. Get in.

VINCENT
Tough shit.

EDDIE
(patiently)
Vincent ... What you take off that Moselle, I heard a hundred.

VINCENT
One fifty!

EDDIE
A hundred fifty!

VINCENT
Yeah! A hundred and fifty!

EDDIE
You go in a shoe store with a hundred twenty dollars, you come out with one shoe! A hundred twenty! We were working on five thousand! C'mon, get in the car ... it's cold.

Vincent pauses. Then gets in.

EDDIE (contd)
(sober, almost awkward)
Do you know how hard it is for me to tell you to lay down? When you're on
(shakes his head)
I watch you ... Hey ... But ... the reality of it is, I got to hold you down ... See ... when I was you, your speed, nobody ever told me that, about control, restraint ... class -- I had to have my head. You don't know what I blew ... what could have been for me ... You got to start listening to me, Vincent. I'm gonna make something of you ... if you listen.
(Eddie gestures with helplessness; hand out)
Gimme.

VINCENT
What?

54 CONTD

EDDIE
(smiling but serious)
Ninety bucks. Sixty percent of 150 is 90 — so, ninety dollars —

Vincent hands him money.

EDDIE (contd)
I could cry ...

55 INT: EDDIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie on the bed, hands on his chest, looking at the ceiling. The phone is cradled between ear and jaw line. He's calling Janelle. Eddie looks beat, troubled.

EDDIE
Hey. I wake you? ... Want me to hang up? You're not still pissed at me, are you ... If you are, I would understand, but you're not, right? ... Oh ... Ah ... I had this nightmare ... sweats and everything ... yeah ... What kind of rent do you pay? ... That's criminal ... Well listen ... After the Bahamas? I think you should move in with me ... y'know a practice run ... yeah.
(beat)
What do you mean? No! Nothing's going on. What're you, a shrink? I miss you and I say nice things to you ... yeah! everything's fine ... I mean, a couple of curve-balls here and there ...
(tired)
nothin' much but y'know, there and here ...

56 INT: DINER ON THE ROAD - BREAKFAST HOUR - DAY

Eddie and company share a booth. The place is packed with truckers and locals.

VINCENT
(wolfing food)
I love this, man ...
(gestures to the parking lot and the highway)
... on the road!

Carmen rolls her eyes.

VINCENT (contd)
Hey ... you shoulda seen Eddie play last night.

EDDIE
(changing subject)
You think we could make some money today or am I still talking to Our Lady of the Cueballs, here?

VINCENT
(finishing up)
Make some money! Definitely!

EDDIE
You ever hear of a hustle called Two Brothers and a Stranger?

VINCENT
The guy in the Bible with the many colored coat, right?
(laughing)
I'm kidding, I'm kidding, relax ...

EDDIE
(mildly, peering speculatively)
Did I get through to you last night? Because if I didn't, I can run it down to you another way ... If you kicked ass in any other place but Chalkie's, Atlantic City would be dead for us ... those guys last night don't leave the street, otherwise it would be all around ...

VINCENT
(touching Eddie's arm)
Eddie ... last night? People don't talk to you like that. You really talked to me. I really appreciate that.

EDDIE
(embarrassed)
Hey ... don't worry about it. You're a good kid ...
OK now! Two Brothers and

57 EXT: STREET - DAY

Eddie's car comes to park. Vincent exits, cradling the Balabushka in the crook of his elbow.

VINCENT
Give me two hours. They'll be building me a trophy wall in there.

EDDIE
(as Vincent walks into pool hall)
Look at that kid -- gets to have all the fun.

58 INT: POOL HALL - DAY
CLOSE UP - TWENTY BUCKS

dropped on felt, scooped up by Vincent.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL the hall -- half busy. Vincent's table is surrounded by a half dozen guys. Vincent folding the twenty over a small roll. The Balabushka leans against the crook of his armpit.

VINCENT
Who's next?

PLAYER
Forget it.

VINCENT
Hey ... I'll spot you the break.

PLAYER
(hesitating)
I want the eight ball too.

VINCENT
(shrugging)
You got it.

Guys crowd around the table for the coming game.

59 EXT: STREET IN FRONT OF POOL HALL - DAY

Eddie stands with Carmen. Puts his arm around her shoulders.

EDDIE
Lock and load.

60 INT: POOL HALL - DAY

Vincent shooting.

VINCENT'S POV

He sees Eddie with his arm around Carman, go to the bar and sit.

VINCENT
Six off the three.

Vincent misses.

Eddie laughs. Vincent looks up. Everyone turns to him.

Eddie, oblivious to the attention, puts his nose in Carmen's neck, says something. Carmen pushes him away, blushing.

Vincent gets angry -- half putting it on.

Player #2 shoots his shot, misses too. Eddie laughs again.

GUY IN CROWD
Whyn't you keep it shut, hah?

EDDIE
What I say?

Eddie nuzzles Carmen again.

VINCENT

VINCENT
Seven off the three.

He makes the shot.

EDDIE
Shit ...

CARMEN
Eddie ... shut up.

VINCENT
Hey, mouth ...

EDDIE
(offended)
Excuse me?

VINCENT
It's a money game here, you mind? Six off the three.

Vincent hits ball. Makes it.

EDDIE
(to Carmen)
Big money match.

VINCENT
Yeah. That's right, a big money match. So, why don't you take your hand off your daughter and watch a pro play.

EDDIE
What do you care where my hand is, mind your own business.

VINCENT
Hey, gramps, put your teeth back in, get your hand off that girl and pay attention, you might learn something.

EDDIE
(rising)
Hey, sonny, are you trying ...

PLAYER #2
(interrupting, to Eddie)
Hey ... we got a game here ...

EDDIE
(to Player #2)
What you playing for?

PLAYER #2
Fifty ...

EDDIE
(to Player #2)
Fifty? You wanna win? I'll bet five hundred on this man here.
(to Vincent)
You look like a choker to me. Five hundred says you choke right now.

VINCENT
Go take a walk, will ya?

EDDIE
(to the crowd)
Anybody wanna bet five hundred, sonny here chokes?

CARMEN
(acting upset)
Eddie, cut it out.

EDDIE
Any takers?

CARMEN
Eddie! I'm gonna leave.

EDDIE
Any takers!

VINCENT
Jerk ...

BARTENDER
You wanna go for a thousand?

Eddie slowly turns to the bartender; Eddie's face is beatific.

61 EXT: SIDE STREET (ALLEY?) - POST POOL

VINCENT
(to Carmen)
What was that?

CARMEN
What?

Vincent grabs her breast, Carmen pushes him away. Eddie whips an arm around the kid, and walks him away.

EDDIE
Hey! Hey!

VINCENT
You get off on that, Eddie?

Vincent pushes him off, starts marching back to Carmen, who this time starts backing up. Eddie grabs him again.

EDDIE
Hey!

Vincent walks away from both of them.

EDDIE (contd)
I'm a little disappointed in you, frankly.

VINCENT
(walking in circles)
Frankly, your ass. I've seen you, man. So don't give me that. I've seen you!

EDDIE
Seen what?

VINCENT
Hey! Screw this. I don't need this. I'm gone. C'mon, I'm goin' home.

CARMEN
The hell you are.

VINCENT
The hell I am.

CARMEN
Then you're going home alone.

VINCENT
Alone, huh?! Oh, I'm going home alone. Is that right?

EDDIE
Hey, hey, listen. You played your part ... nice ... when I put my hand on her? That's my part. It's acting, don't you get that?

CARMEN
What do you think, every time you see people kissing in the movies they go home together. They're professionals.

EDDIE
That's what we're trying to be ... professionals. Does it sink in? Huh?

CLOSE ON VINCENT

confused, trying to shrug it off.

VINCENT
(giving in, mumbling)
Yeah, well, it's a little rough
on me, that's all. I'm not used
to that ... I dunno ... I dunno ...

EDDIE
(affectionately)
Vincent ... Vincent the Kid ...
You are gonna be one of the
greats ... I have a very good
feeling about this.

62 MONTAGE OF POOL ENCOUNTERS

Vincent wearing glasses, shoots the cue off the table in an old vast pool hall. Everyone around the table laughs, including Eddie. His opponent is a burly middle-aged man.

The opponent forking over a fistful of cash to Vincent.

63 Eddie driving at night. Vincent and Carmen sleeping.

64 Vincent, seemingly drunk, playing a tall skinny guy in granny glasses and a pony tail. He dogs a shot. The skinny guy offers him a joint. Vincent nods no, holding up his drink and horse laughing.

The skinny guy giving Vincent money. Vincent takes his joint, takes a drag, gives it back.

65 Vincent driving at night. Eddie and Carmen sleeping.

66 Eddie playing alone.

67 Carmen sitting at a bar, and watching Vincent play a young Spanish trucker in the bar mirror behind her.

Vincent hands over money to the trucker.

The trucker hands over money to Vincent.

The trucker hands over more money to Vincent.

The trucker hands over even more money to Vincent.

The trucker takes a swing at Vincent. Vincent kicks him in the balls and runs.

68 Motel room, bathed in blue TV light. Vincent and Carmen, fully dressed, crashed on top of the bed. Eddie sitting in a chair in his T-shirt and socks -- glass of bourbon -- watching TV.

69 EXT: MAVERICK CLUB - NIGHT

It's a long cinderblock painted bar on a highway, the name hand-painted along the side. It looks like a bucket of blood dive.

70 INT: MAVERICK CLUB - NIGHT

Eddie, Vincent and Carmen enter. It's smoky, honky-tonk. A narrow long line of pool tables stretching the entire length bordered by those aluminum fold-out bleachers.

EDDIE
(sniffing)
Hah ... you smell what I smell?

VINCENT
Smoke?

CARMEN
Money ...

EDDIE
Let's take a stroll around, see what's what.

ANGLE

They cruise the tables. Money changes hands. The players are good; concentrators, no bangers. Eddie does a double-take at the last table. He holds up the procession and makes them sit on the bleacher.

VINCENT
What's shakin'?

EDDIE
(intense, mind going ninety m.p.h.)
Check this guy out.

Eddie tilts his chin towards one of the players, skinny, early twenties, quick, speedy, chain-smoking. He wears continental slacks, Italian loafers, and a dark polyester shirt, buttoned at the neck and wrist -- his hair is longish and blow dried -- a wispy moustache. He shoots like a machine -- never a false or wasted move. He doesn't miss.

VINCENT
(mildly)
That guy?

Eddie pulls Vincent and Carmen aside.

EDDIE
This is what's called a Golden Opportunity ... you know who that is? That's Grady Seasons, the best money player in the world!

VINCENT
(leaning past Eddie to stare at Seasons)
That's Grady Seasons?
(shrugs)
You want me to play him?

EDDIE
(fervent)
You bet. But you're gonna dump. You're gonna lose something fierce. You're gonna ask for a spot, you're gonna ask for the break ... everything. It's gonna be humiliating. This is beautiful.

VINCENT
(shocked)
What do you mean dump!

EDDIE
(to Carmen)
What do I mean, dump ...

CARMEN
(half speaking to Eddie)
Because if you lose bad now, to this guy, you'll be a super-nobody in Atlantic City and the odds on you'll drop to nothing, right?

EDDIE
(ushering them to the bleachers; to Vincent)
See? She learns.

70 CONTD 71

They take a seat on the bleachers closest to the game.

VINCENT
Let me ask you something. I see these guys -- they hustle and they win! How come I always gotta play the jerk?! Why can't we get a hustle where I win?!

EDDIE
(for his ears only)
Because this is better than that ... there's something at the end of this ... I wouldn't tell you to do this unless the payoff would be phenomenal.
(long beat)
Hey ... you do what you wanna do ... Do it your way ... whatever you want.

VINCENT
(a resigned beat)
I'll do it for you.

EDDIE
(to Grady)
Hey, Seasons!

71 INT: MAVERICK CLUB - NIGHT
ANGLE

Grady playing Vincent.

Grady running balls.

GRADY
(to Vincent)
It's like a nightmare, isn't it?

ANGLE

The roll out bleachers. Eddie sits, elbows on knees, on the top row. Carmen on the bottom row, closest to the action.

ANGLE

Grady continues his run.

GRADY (contd)
It just keeps getting worse and worse.

Vincent is black-faced at this arrogant patter. He looks up to Eddie. Eddie nods sympathetically, gestures with his hand to cool it.

Grady misses finally, leaving Vincent a bitch of a shot.

GRADY (contd)
Oh! The impossible dream!

Vincent studies the table, quick-glances at Eddie, resigns himself to a dogged shot.

GRADY (contd)
Don't clutch now ... it's not that hard a shot.

VINCENT
(flipped)
Don't clutch?

Vincent makes the shot, then sinks the rest of the table.

Amused, Grady starts racking up as Vincent, ignoring Eddie and Carmen, grinds chalk into his tip.

VINCENT (contd)
(hunching down to break)
Hey, Brady ...
(Vincent smashes the pack)
Up your ass with the spot ... OK with you?

ANGLE

Eddie and Carmen watching from their separate positions on the bleachers.

ANGLE - THE TABLE

Vincent shooting a ball, patrolling the table, sinking another.

ANGLE - THE TABLE

Both kids playing bust out pool.

ANGLE

A crowd is starting to shape up.

ANGLE - CLOSE UP - EDDIE

He looks sphinx-like, riveted to the action.

ANGLE

Carmen looks irritated by the crowd, by Vincent blowing the game plan.

ANGLE - THE GAME
FAST MONTAGE OF SHOTS

Grady and Vincent cut with CLOSE UPS of Eddie's impassive but attentive face and CLOSE UPS of Carmen's growing fury.

ANGLE

Carmen rises, heads for the table.

CARMEN
(leaning against the cushion)
Hey, baby?

VINCENT
I'm playing.

CARMEN
C'mere for a minute.

Vincent comes over, Carmen puts her arms around Vincent's neck in a hug.

CARMEN (contd)
(deadly earnest)
You win one more game, you're gonna be humping your fist for a long time.

Carmen kisses him on the mouth.

CARMEN (contd)
Yeah? OK?

Carmen gives him another hard kiss, then returns to the bleachers.

ANGLE - CLOSE UP - EDDIE

He's frowning, alert.

CARMEN
(twisting her head to speak to Eddie above her. Softly so no one can hear outside of Eddie -- acidly)
What are you doing up there, meditating?

Eddie stares at her.

71 CONTD

ANGLE

Vincent, thrown, bends to shoot, stares at the ball.

CLOSE UP - THE BALL

missing the pocket.

72 INT: VINCENT AND CARMEN'S MOTEL ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

There is a knock at the door. Vincent goes to it.

VINCENT
Yeah?

EDDIE
It's me.

Vincent opens the door.

EDDIE (contd)
(coming in)
Can you give me the Balabushka?

Vincent gets Balabushka.

VINCENT
You gonna play, Eddie?

EDDIE
Yeah ... maybe.

VINCENT
You ... you want me to come?

EDDIE
Nah — it's OK.

VINCENT
You mad at me?

EDDIE
No ... no ... you did good, kid.

Eddie exits.

CARMEN
Where's he goin'?

73 INT: BAR AND GRILL POOL HALL - HALF HOUR LATER - DAY

Eddie cruises in, cue under his arm. There's three tables. It's a small place. Half a dozen guys at the bar. No one playing. Eddie walks casually over to a pool table, puts

down his cue case, reaches into his pocket, peels off a hundred dollar bill and places it on the rail. Ignoring the six guys at the bar he starts to rack up.

ONE OF THE GUYS
(to the bartender)
Call Dud.

74 INT: BAR AND GRILL POOL HALL - DAY
ANGLE - TWO HOURS LATER

The bar -- twice as many guys drinking. Eddie is playing a huge man, Dud, bearded. He wears a T-shirt that has "EAT ME" stencilled on the chest.

Eddie is shooting. He sinks the nine. Dud digs in for a hundred.

DUD
Frank? 'Nother Drambuie and Potato Salad? An' another J.S.W. Brown for Eddie here.
(to Eddie)
One more time?

EDDIE
(in a great mood)
Absolutely.

75 INT: BAR AND GRILL POOL HALL - DUSK
ANGLE - TWO HOURS LATER

The bar is wall to wall.

Eddie and Dud are still going at it. One table is still deserted, the other has a young fat guy playing solo. Eddie looks red-faced, blinky but happy still.

DUD
That's all she wrote.

EDDIE
Good book, though.

DUD
(nodding to the bar)
Buy you one?

EDDIE
I'm gonna play a little.
(to the fat kid, Amos, at the next table)
Feel like a game?

Amos shrugs OK.

76 INT: BAR AND GRILL POOL HALL - NIGHT
ANGLE - HALF HOUR LATER

Vincent and Carmen entering the bar, looking for Eddie.

Carmen spots him playing Amos.

ANGLE

AMOS
(working the table)
Then after, I got a job working at the university? Strictly for the experience.
(calls a shot)
Guess what I was ...
(misses)

EDDIE
What.

AMOS
What?

EDDIE
What were you?
(calls a shot, hits)

AMOS
I was a subject.

EDDIE
A what?

AMOS
(as Eddie runs table)
A subject! ... in the psych department. I was a subject for experiments ... reflexes, memory things. But I didn't do anything where I get shocked ... well, I did once but just for the experience.

EDDIE
(sinks the nine)
Game.

AMOS
OK. That's eighty.
(tosses a twenty on the felt)
Screw it ... I earn money the old-fashioned way ... I inherit it.
(laughs)

EDDIE
(proud of himself)
One more, kid?

AMOS
Yeah, sure.

EDDIE
Double or nothing?

AMOS
Double or nothing?

EDDIE
Is there an echo here?

AMOS
(laughs)
Let's do it.

Vincent and Carmen saunter over.

VINCENT
Hey, Eddie ... how you doin'?

EDDIE
(grinning)
Holdin' my own ... a little of his ...

VINCENT
(mildly)
Good man.

EDDIE
(semi-joking)
Hey ... now we got two guns.
Cover the street at both ends.
(to Carmen and Vincent)
Have a drink.

ANGLE

Carmen and Vincent watch Eddie play from the bar.

77 INT: BAR AND GRILL POOL HALL - NIGHT
ANGLE

Amos shooting a combination. The nine rolls towards pocket.

AMOS
Go! Go! Go!

The nine goes in. Amos jumps in the air. Eddie shrugs it off.

AMOS (contd)
That it?

EDDIE
Do it again.

AMOS
Double or nothing?

ANGLE

Carmen and Vincent at the bar.

78 INT: BAR AND GRILL POOL HALL - NIGHT
ANGLE

Amos on the snap -- the nine goes in on the break.

AMOS
Hey! That is bullshit ... I never did that ... that is luck ... I am really sorry.

EDDIE
(dropping 200 on the felt)
You a hustler, Amos?

AMOS
(hurt)
Hey, Eddie ...

EDDIE
You a hustler?

AMOS
(hands up in submission)
Hey ... you don't want to pay me? Keep it. I don't want bad feelings. A guy loses ...

EDDIE
You a hustler, Amos?

AMOS
(slight hardness beneath the jollity)
You want to quit?

EDDIE
Fuck you, kid ... double it again.

79 INT: BAR AND GRILL POOL HALL - NIGHT
ANGLE

Four hundreds drop on the felt, Amos scooping them up.

AMOS
(breaking down his cue and staring at Eddie with a devil grin)
Hey ... I want to ask you something and I want you to be honest with me.

Eddie stares at him. He's trying to control his rage, his shame.

AMOS (contd)
You think I need to lose some weight?

Amos grins, head cocked, mouth open, waiting for Eddie's reaction. Eddie makes the slightest tilt with his body towards Amos, using all his willpower not to fly at his throat. Amos knows it.

Amos splits, laughing.

Eddie stares at the felt, casually picking lint at random. He picks up a ball, grips it like a baseball, then still staring at the felt, lightly drops the ball into a pocket. He suddenly laughs to himself, shaking his head. It's a scary false laugh.

ANGLE

Carmen and Vincent at a table. Eddie strides over, takes Carmen's drink, and still standing, takes a gulp.

EDDIE
It isn't easy ... You really have to work hard ... I mean you really have to put in the time and the effort to show your ass like that. The signals that have to be ignored ... I mean really hard hard work here.

Eddie floats down into a chair, stunned.

VINCENT
(lightly, slightly nervous)
Hey ... you'll nail his ass next time.

Eddie doesn't hear, he's lost in his own turmoil. Suddenly he erupts in anger and anguish.

EDDIE
Je-sus!

Eddie rises and marches out the door.

80 INT: STAIRCASE OF POOL HALL - NIGHT

Carmen and Vincent cautiously emerge from inside to check on Eddie. Eddie stands on staircase.

VINCENT
Eddie? You Ok?

EDDIE
(resolved, self-absorbed)
How much you need to go it on your own from here to Atlantic City.

VINCENT
Why?

CARMEN
(wary)
What do you mean?

EDDIE
(furious at himself)
I should've wiped the floor with that bastard.

CARMEN
Yeah, so?

EDDIE
(all business)
So how much would you need to go from here to Atlantic City?
(reaches for his wallet)
A thousand?

VINCENT
Hey, Eddie, you had a little too much to drink -- forget about it.

EDDIE
(brusque)
I got nothing else to teach you ... that was the last lesson
(MORE)

EDDIE (contd)
back there ... take some money
and front yourself ... you'll
do fine.

VINCENT
(stunned)
You're walking off?

CARMEN
(angry, amazed, flat)
You're dumping us.

EDDIE
(shouting)
Dumping you! I'm giving you a
thousand dollars as a stake!
I showed you all I got I showed
you my ass in there. What else
you want? That's it ... That's
all.

VINCENT
What are we supposed to do!
Where we supposed to go!

EDDIE
(blazing)
Hey ...
(spreads his arms
— right hand)
... here's you ...
(left hand)
... here's Atlantic City ...
(distance in between
his hands)
... here's three weeks, 27
goddamn pool halls, and a
thousand dollars. What the
hell else you want, an Indian
guide? Use your brains!

VINCENT
Somebody comes around, plays
you for a chump, so you're out
of here? So you get him next
time!

oes down the stairs. Vincent runs down and stops

VINCENT (contd)
ain't right. You can't do it!

EDDIE
What the hell you want from me? You always do what you want anyhow. I say do this, you do that.

VINCENT
(overlapping)
Don't you tell me that!

EDDIE
(continuing)
I'm tired!

VINCENT
(overlapping)
I try to do everything you say. Don't tell me that! I do everything!

EDDIE
You don't need me. I got nothing else to give you. Take the money.

VINCENT
What? You wanna buy me off? You wanna give me money?

Close to violence.

VINCENT (contd)
C'mon, man, give me money, give me money ...

EDDIE
(reaching for his wallet)
You're very young, Vincent, you don't understand.

VINCENT
Give me money.

EDDIE
(with distracted, delayed anger)
Hey! You don't know what I'm about, so don't ...

VINCENT
(cutting him off)
Shut up! Give me money.

Eddie sighs. There's no words for this. He's got to get out. He extracts some bills.

CARMEN
(cold, angry)
Make it fifteen hundred.

EDDIE
(pauses)
You got it.

VINCENT
Make it sixteen hundred! Make it two thousand.

Vincent suddenly flings the cue in Eddie's direction.

VINCENT (contd)
Y'know something! Keep your fucking money!

Eddie stands there in shock at the violence in Vincent. Vincent leaves.

Eddie turns to Carmen. He vaguely gestures for her to take the money. Carmen hesitates, then snatches it. Last glance at Eddie, then walks after Vincent.

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: From this point on, Eddie's personality changes. He becomes more self-contained, quiet, tense. He's shooting for something which both scares him and feeds him like he hasn't been fed in twenty-five years.)

81 INT: CHALKIE'S - DAY

Eddie stands in the doorway for a long beat.

Orvis in the cage.

Eddie saunters in, the pool cue under his arm.

Orvis stares at him for a long beat, nodding.

ORVIS
(unsurprised)
What table you want, Fast Eddie?

EDDIE
Nine-ball's shit pool ...

ORVIS
It's money pool ... it's the arena, my man.

EDDIE
My eyes are shot.

ORVIS
Yeah, well ... we take care a that.

ANGLE

Eddie staring at an empty table. Pours the balls on the felt. Rolls them with his hands. Sits down, holding the cue stick like a staff. The pool hall is almost deserted.

82 ANGLE - ONE HOUR LATER

Eddie studying the spread of balls -- making shots -- more tables occupied.

83 INT: CHALKIE'S - NIGHT
ANGLE - FULL HOUSE

Eddie stands in front of the cage, rolling his neck, feeling the strain.

ORVIS
Feel good, don't it?

EDDIE
I'm blind ...

ORVIS
You don't want a game? I can get your three games tonight ... you lookin' not too bad.

EDDIE
I don't think so ... What time you open up tomorrow morning?

84 INT: MOTEL SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Eddie dives in, swims a slow strong lap, scoops himself out on the opposite end of the pool in an arched back posture, chin tilted straight up.

85 EXT: CHALKIE'S FRONT - NEXT MORNING

Orvis pulls up in a butter yellow Cadillac. Sleep in his face, he fumbles with his keys to open up.

Eddie emerges out of <u>his</u> Cadillac across the street. He's been waiting for Orvis to show up. He saunters toward Chalkie's, pool cue under his arm.

86 MONTAGE

Eddie's POV. The black eye doctor testing Eddie's vision.

DOCTOR
(adjusting instrument)
Better? Same? Worse?
(adjusting again)
Better? Same? Worse?

87 INT: CHALKIE'S - DAY

Eddie wearing glasses, alone at Chalkie's at 10:00 A.M. He's sitting on the rail of a table reading a newspaper spread out on the immaculate green felt.

88 INT: INT: CHALKIE'S - DAY

Eddie shooting alone, at noon -- a few players.

89 INT: CHALKIE'S - DAY

Eddie shooting alone at three -- place 3/4 full.

90 INT: CHALKIE'S - DUSK

Eddie sitting, beer in hand, cue across his lap, scanning Chalkie's from his table -- 6:00 P.M.

91 INT: CHALKIE'S - NIGHT

Eddie squinting down, adjusting his glasses -- getting used to them as he plays -- 8:00 P.M.

92 INT: CHALKIE'S - NIGHT

Eddie standing at his table, rolling his neck -- 9:00 P.M.

93 INT: CHALKIE'S - NIGHT
ANGLE

Orvis and Moselle come up behind him.

ORVIS
I like the glasses.

EDDIE
(embarrassed)
Yeah?

ORVIS
Fast Eddie, this here is Moselle.

EDDIE
What's the story?

MOSELLE
That's a pretty stick.

EDDIE
I want the break.

Orvis nods Ok.

EDDIE (contd)
What's the book?

ORVIS
Fifty on Fast Eddie wins a hundred. Fifty on Moselle wins twenty-five.

EDDIE
Thanks a lot.

ORVIS
Facts of life, my man.

EDDIE
(to Moselle)
How about a hundred on the side?

MOSELLE
Read my mind.

ANGLE - CLOSE UP

Many non-white hands passing cash, Orvis' hands grabbing the money and scrawling names and amounts in a dirty notebook.

94 MONTAGE

Surrounded by noisy bettors:

Eddie shoots, Moselle shoots, Eddie shoots, Moselle shoots.

95 Eddie paying Moselle a hundred dollars.

96 Eddie's Cadillac barrelling down the road.

97 CLOSE UP of a rack of nine balls. An anonymous player smashes a break.

98 CLOSE UP of Eddie shooting.

99 CLOSE UP of young, wiry guy, hillbilly looking, shooting.

Eddie paying hillbilly.

100 CLOSE UP of Eddie shooting.

101 CLOSE UP of tough looking woman shooting.

Eddie paying woman.

102 CLOSE UP of Eddie shooting.

103 CLOSE UP of basketball tall black man shooting.

Eddie paying black man.

104 Eddie shooting.

Black man paying Eddie.

105 Eddie shooting.

Woman paying Eddie.

106 Eddie shooting.

Eddie paying hillbilly.

Hillbilly paying Eddie.

Hillbilly paying Eddie again.

And again.

107 INT: CHALKIE'S - NIGHT

Crowded. Eddie and Moselle playing surrounded by the crowd.

Eddie shoots. Moselle shoots. Eddie shoots. Moselle shoots.

108 INT: CHALKIE'S - NIGHT

Moselle paying Eddie in front of Orvis.

EDDIE
You guys going to Atlantic City?

109 EXT: HIGHWAY - DAY
CLOSE UP - EDDIE

driving -- squinting anxiously at the distant hotels spaced out like gap teeth, the sea mist reducing them to silhouettes.

110 EXT: CASINO - ONE HOUR LATER

Eddie walking through a sea of slot machines and players towards the lobby. He carries his cue under one arm, a small leather suitcase in one hand.

111 INT: CHECK-IN DESK

Eddie getting a key on a ring the size of a small discus.

112 INT: EDDIE'S ROOM

Walls and ceiling a light chlorine blue. Eddie lies flat on his bed staring at an oversized TV screen.

On the screen is an in-house station teaching you how to play Blackjack.

Eddie bolts up in bed, rubs his eyes with the heel of his palms.

113 INT: SIGN-IN DESK FOR THE TOURNAMENT

Eddie stands on line with other players before a collapsible card table where a young black woman in a casino jumpsuit is doing the registration. He looks like he's hiding or signing up for unemployment.

ANGLE

A registration card and five hundred dollar bills dropped on the table. Card reads "Eddie Felson."

SEATED CLERK'S POV

WE SEE Eddie.

CLERK
Knock 'em dead.

114 INT: TOURNAMENT HALL - DAY

Eddie walks into the room — a huge arena under soft lights — it's big enough for a prize fight crowd. Eddie takes on the sea of impeccable tables, the miles of shining empty aluminum bleachers. The place looks twice as large because Eddie's the only one in the room.

Eddie is startled by the abrupt magnified sputter and crackle of a P.A. system being turned on, followed by a sudden burst of light that floods a raised dais at the far end of the room. The P.A. emits sonic squeaks and hums as it is adjusted.

EDDIE'S POV

There are about six men on stage, one dapper, heavy, in his late sixties, the others younger. They crowd around the heavy man. Their words are inadvertently broadcast over a standing mike.

OLDER MAN (MINNESOTA FATS)
These lights got to be on like
this?

YOUNGER MAN
Just don't look right into them,
you'll be OK ...
(he hands a trophy
to the older man)
Now just remember, when you show
this thing to the room ...
(he raises his hands
high)
over your head ... like this.

OLDER MAN
What the hell you think I am, a
chorus girl?

CLOSE - EDDIE

His face is a cross between shock and pleasure.

EDDIE
(to himself, with
affection)
Fats ...

115 INT: REGISTRATION DESK - DAY

EDDIE
(to the clerk)
Where's the practice room?

CASINO CLERK
The Green Room ... two rights
and a left.

JULIAN (OS)
Hey, Eddie!

Eddie looks up. Julian and Elmo, another young player from the "Q," are there with their cue cases.

JULIAN (contd)
(grinning)
Eddie! Where's your man?
(Julian notices Eddie
is carrying his cue;
drawling in amused
disbelief)
No-o shit ...
(laughing)
Eddie, you playing?

EDDIE
You got a problem with that?

JULIAN
(laughing)
Not me.
(to Elmo)
You got a problem with that?

ELMO
(jerks back his
chin)
No problem at all.

116 INT: THE "GREEN ROOM" - DAY

The practice room. Walls and drapes lime green like a hangover. Eight tables. Plastic chairs for fans. Security guard in a uniform, old black guy with glasses.

Six tables are occupied by younger players. Girlfriends watch. They talk and move like they own the place. Their dress ranges from Heavy Metal to Casino Flash.

ANGLE

Eddie rolling out a tray of balls, getting to work. Eddie tries to concentrate on his game, but he's in the midst of the heart of what he dreads about playing again.

Eddie bends down to shoot.

We hear the murmur and shouts of a large crowd.

117 INT: TOURNAMENT ROOM - DAY

PAN OF CROWD.

It's the tournament room, the bleachers are filled.

There are players at every table warming up. There's a dais of judges and scorekeepers on an elevated platform and overhead along one entire wall is an opaque projection of who's playing at what table with score boxes. It's similar to the scorekeeping projection at a bowling tournament. A giant shadow hand is writing in names.

At each table is an attendant in white shirt, bow tie, black pants, short red apron and white gloves who racks the balls and grooms the felt. The attendant wears a miniature speaker-headset to communicate with the judges.

CLOSE UP - DUKE DUKAS BREAKING

Duke is middle-aged, heavy, nervous, glasses and a moustache. Sharkskin pants and a Guyabera shirt which hugs his gut.

Duke breaks -- nothing goes in.

DUKE
(to himself)
I didn't deserve that.

WE SEE Eddie -- polo shirt, gold slacks. Everything loose for comfort. Eddie smiles at him -- guys who say shit like that beat themselves. Eddie pats baby powder on his hands, rubs powder on the length of his stick, and approaches the table.

EDDIE
This your first tournament, Duke?

Duke doesn't answer.

118 INT: TOURNAMENT ROOM - DAY
ANGLE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

The projected screen showing scores. The giant shadow hand is marking up another game for Felson. The score is Felson -- nine marks, Dukas -- one mark.

119 INT: TOURNAMENT HALL - DAY

ANGLE - EDDIE SHOOTING

In the room we hear sporadic shouts and applause for shots made at various tables.

Eddie sinks the nine. Some applause for Eddie. He's won the race to ten.

The attendant, speaking into the headset, murmurs something to the judges, then shakes hands with Eddie.

Eddie shakes hands with Duke.

DUKE
I didn't deserve that.

EDDIE
(casual, yet emphatic)
Sure you did.

119 CONTD

ANGLE - THE DAIS
MINNESOTA FATS' POV

WE SEE Eddie in the distance, packing up.

CLOSE ON FATS

holding a cigarette, studying Eddie through heavy-lidded eyes.

120 INT: BAR IN THE CASINO - NIGHT

There's a young attractive group on a small stage singing "Aquarius" or "Up Up and Away" to half-empty tables. The tables separate the stage from a long dimly lit bar.

Young pool players make up half the bar crowd, talking loudly, laughing among themselves.

Eddie sits alone nursing a bourbon. He seems less tense than he's been since deciding to play in the tournament.

VINCENT (OS)
Wait a minute ... wait a minute ... I have to win only eight games to your ten?

PLAYER
That's right.

VINCENT
And all I have to put up is eight hundred to your twelve hundred?

PLAYER
You got it.

VINCENT
Carmen ... that's a good deal.

CARMEN
This guy won the Akron Open, Vincent, don't be a jerk.

VINCENT
(angry)
I can win eight games! Don't blow this.

PLAYER
Sure.

CARMEN
(to player)
I don't like it ... I tell you what. I tell you what ... What if you make your end fifteen hundred.

VINCENT
Hey, Carmen ...

PLAYER
No problem. OK. 12:30.

Eddie smiles to his drink as he overhears this conversation.

Carmen and Vincent watch the guy from Akron head off.

VINCENT
(calmly)
Fifteen hundred?

CARMEN
Not bad.

VINCENT
(low key acid)
Not bad, hah?

CARMEN
(defensive)
He wouldn't go for more.

VINCENT
Yeah? ... You wouldn't go for more. That guy had two thousand dollars written all over his face, Carmen. He just made five hundred dollars ... Thank you.

Vincent turns away in disgust, sees Eddie, who's heard all this. Vincent's face hardens, relaxes, he strolls over.

Vincent is dressed to kill in a hustler sort of way. Italian slacks, rust V-neck sweater, chains and tasseled loafers. Vincent does a slight double take, then strolls over.

VINCENT
(reserved but in control)
Hey ... glasses ... they look good.

EDDIE
(cautious)
Hey, Vincent the Kid ...
Carmen ...

CARMEN
(a little cool)
You looked good today.

VINCENT
So how's it going?

EDDIE
Can't complain ... how about
you guys?

Vincent half-pulls a thick wad of money out of his front pocket.

VINCENT
(casual, low key
pride)
We made like four thousand on
the road in two weeks ...
could've been better, could've
been worse.

EDDIE
Great ... I'm happy for you.

VINCENT
(long beat)
About twelve-twelve thirty in
the Green Room, I'm taking out
that lame from Akron. Did you
see what we did to him? You
want to get in on it?

EDDIE
(grateful for the
gesture, relieved)
I'm gonna pass, kid. I got a
game at ten in the morning
... I'm gonna pack it in early.

VINCENT
It's on you, chief.
(long beat)
Anyways, good luck tomorrow.

EDDIE
Same to you.

Vincent splits. Carmen stays at the bar.

EDDIE (contd)
you guys doin' good, huh?

CARMEN
We did OK ... ... you were right, you know ... we really didn't need you anymore.

EDDIE
(with a twinge)
See? Didn't I say so?

CARMEN
You wouldn't believe Vincent now ... you wouldn't even recognize him.

EDDIE
A new man, huh?

CARMEN
Why didn't you take him up on tonight?

EDDIE
I told you, I'm playing tomorrow early.

Carmen stares at him, hesitates (as if to say something), walks away.

121 INT: ELEVATOR BANK IN LOBBY OUTSIDE THE CASINO - 8:00 A.M.

Eddie, cue case under arm, is walking to the Green Room. The hotel is quiet, the gamblers dead on their feet from all-night action. Eddie looks fresh, rested.

As he strides across the lobby, Minnesota Fats emerges from the casino from an all-nighter. He looks tired but together.

The two men stare at each other (long beat).

EDDIE
(beaming, tilts his head towards the casino room)
How'd you do?

FATS
(shrugs, slight smile)
Where you goin', Fast Eddie?

EDDIE
Headin' over to the Green Room.

FATS
(pushing elevator button)
You need more privacy than that ... c'mon up.

EDDIE
Hey ... it's eight in the morning ... it'll be deserted.

FATS
(elevator door opening)
C'mon up ... the hookers like to play in there before calling it a night.

122 INT: FATS' LUXURY SUITE - DAY

It's a lavish duplex suite; a high roller's "comped" room. It has a pool table; view of the ocean.

EDDIE
(stroking the felt)
Jesus, Fats, you always did it right.

FATS
Yeah, well ... they don't pay you a hell of a lot for mingling and passing out loving cups ...
(gesturing to refer to the room)
they make it up in other ways ... you want a drink?

EDDIE
(nodding towards the bright early light out the window)
Are you serious?

FATS
(shrugs)
I don't drink anymore myself.
(beat)
Last time I saw you we were both throwing it back around the clock ... remember that, kid?

EDDIE
Kid? You know how long it's been since somebody called me a kid?

FATS
It's all relative.

EDDIE
(cautious, half-smile)
Hey, Fats ... you feel like playin' a little?

FATS
(heading for the stairs, shrugs it off)
I'm goin' to sleep ... let yourself out when you finish.

EDDIE
Fats ...

Fats turns.

EDDIE (contd)
What do you think ... me doin' this ... now.

FATS
(after a beat)
Eddie ... what's the attraction for me, here, the free room? The paycheck? I own three apartment houses. I gotta be around it. I'm too old to play worth a shit anymore, but I gotta be around it.
(wistful)
You looked strong yesterday, kid ... you looked sharp. I envy you.

A woman, Janelle's age, but beautiful, comes down the stairs. She walks between them to the kitchen.

EDDIE
(startled, pleased, fighting down a grin; ["Envy" my ass], gesturing to the table; ironic)
The noise won't keep you up?

FATS
(fighting down his own

Eddie, shaking his head, pouring balls on table. The woman comes out of the kitchen, carrying a tray with two O.J.s.

WOMAN
Fats thinks you're something else.

EDDIE
(a little flustered, a little competitive)
Well, hey, you should have seen Fats when he was playing.

WOMAN
(shrugging, heading for the bedroom)
Yeah, well, he's still a pretty hot stick man.

Eddie nods, casually salutes in the direction of the bedroom.

123 INT: TOURNAMENT ROOM - DAY

ANGLE

Vincent breaks.

Julian breaks.

Grady breaks.

Eddie breaks.

ANGLE - VINCENT

sinking the nine off a tough combination.

VINCENT
(to Grady)
It's like a nightmare, isn't it?

ANGLE - EDDIE

breaking. The nine is on the rim of the pocket, the one ball right on line.

Julian, looking disgusted with himself, sweeping the nine in with the side of his cue to concede the shot and the game.

EDDIE
Wipe your nose, Julian.

JULIAN
You're going down.

ANGLE - GRADY

blowing a shot, arching back in melodramatic exasperation.

VINCENT
It just gets worse and worse.

ANGLE

Vincent wading through the crowd accepting congratulations.

124 Eddie wading through the crowd accepting congratulations. Fats at judge's table. They shake hands.

125 INT: EDDIE'S HOTEL ROOM - DUSK

Eddie enters, flings his cue on the couch.

Stands there, snapping and clapping, wired with joy.

He starts pacing, humming to himself, eyes darting around the room for some kind of outlet. He moves towards the TV, thinks better of it.

Grabs the phone, dials.

EDDIE
Janelle ... hey ... how are you? Good ... good ... when was the last time you were in Atlantic City? Amazing, right? You remember the diving horse? The salt water taffy? Gone ... everything ... I haven't been here in maybe ten years? Fifteen years I don't even know ... just amazing ...
(beat)
You know I'm playing, yeah, and ah --
(from the heart)
I'm doin' so goddamn great, Janelle ... just great.

126 INT: LOBBY OUTSIDE THE TOURNAMENT HALL - DAY

A room bordered by collapsible tables covered with pool related articles for sale, T-shirts, buttons, cue sticks, warm-up jackets. There's a hot and cold buffet along one wall. Mounted on a huge stand-up easel is a diagram of tournament games

Eddie traces his progress; his defeat of Duke Dukas, his defeat of Julian. The field is down from 64 to 16.

WE SEE his next draw is Vincent.

CLOSE ON EDDIE

nodding to himself, destiny calls.

127 INT: GREEN ROOM ENTRANCE - ONE HOUR LATER - DAY

Eddie standing on the threshold watching Vincent play ring-pool (rotating multi-player pool) with some hustlers.

Vincent's at ease -- they all are -- laughing and heckling each other's shots.

Eddie moves towards the folding chairs, watches Vincent in his element. Eddie feels a mixture of envy, fondness and anxiety.

At one point Vincent spots Eddie, laughs, waves and aims his cue like a rifle at him.

Vincent makes a gun sound.

Carmen enters, sits next to Eddie. Eddie doesn't acknowledge her. He looks like he's in a trance, staring at his hands -- as if something momentous is being worked out in his head.

EDDIE
(brightly, suddenly coming to life)
I'm gonna beat him. I'm definitely gonna beat him.

CARMEN
Huh ... Is that a fact.

EDDIE
Bank on it.

Carmen stares at Eddie for a beat. They both turn to watch Vincent play.

128 INT: EDDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eddie opening the door to see Janelle in his bed watching TV. She clicks off the set on the remote control. Smiles at Eddie. Eddie looks surprised and happy.

129 INT: TOURNAMENT - DAY

Eddie and Vincent crouched down lagging simultaneously. Vincent wins.

130 MONTAGE - TOURNAMENT - DAY

of Vincent and Eddie shooting, interspersed with scratch marks drawn on the overhead score card, interspersed with CLOSE UPS of Grady, Julian, Carmen, Janelle in the crowd.

Eddie watching as Vincent makes shot after shot. Vincent misses an easy shot, Eddie draws a breath.

Eddie sinks the nine.

Vincent sinks the nine.

Eddie calls a safe forfeiting his own shot, to leave Vincent a difficult situation (by burying the cue). Vincent busts out, sinks the nine.

Eddie breaks -- sinks the nine. Shakes his fist tensely in triumph -- pure luck.

On the overhead, scratch marks register neck and neck games to nine even.

131 INT: TOURNAMENT - DAY
THE LAST RACK AT NINE AND NINE

Vincent breaks, drops two balls on the break, moves like a machine up to the six, misses a bank.

Vincent sinks to his knees, holding his cue, forehead between his fingers, shaking his head.

Eddie sinks the six, the seven, the eight, the nine, wins.

Eddie draws a huge breath. He's trying to control his terrible excitement as he shakily dismantles his Balabushka. He's almost heaving.

CLOSE UP - CARMEN

deadpan in the crowd. Huge applause at this upset.

Vincent leans against the table, his back to Eddie dismantling his cue.

EDDIE
(joyous)
You shot great, kid. The balls roll funny, I told you that, remember? But you shot great.

VINCENT
Yup.

Eddie walking through the crowd in a daze.

131 CONTD

CLOSE ON FATS

on the dais — impassive.

132 INT: EDDIE'S ROOM

Vincent banging on the door. Eddie, in a bathrobe, after too long a beat.

VINCENT (OS)
(knocking)
Eddie?

EDDIE
Yeah, yeah. Just a minute.
Christ!

Vincent and Carmen enter. There is champagne, bucket, glasses, etc., on table.

EDDIE (contd)
Hey ... Come in! ... I got
Kennedy in the quarter finals
tomorrow ... you know anything
about him?

Vincent and Carmen don't answer.

EDDIE (contd)
What ...

Vincent pulls out an envelope, drops it on the coffee table.

EDDIE (contd)
What.

CARMEN
That's for you.

Janelle enters in a bathrobe.

VINCENT
Hey! How you doin'?

Janelle nods hello, sits next to Eddie.

Eddie opens the envelope, it's heavy with cash.

EDDIE
What's this?

VINCENT
That's your cut ... I told you
I owe you one.

EDDIE
Cut of what.

VINCENT
For the game.

EDDIE
(starting to tense)
What game?

VINCENT
(hard, proud tone)
Our game, man. I dumped. We got a front to lay all four thousand on you and I dumped. It wasn't that hard, all's I had to do was dog about four shots. You are definitely not bad. I feel shitty a little getting booted, but what the hell, there's other tournaments.

EDDIE
(shocked)
You dumped?

VINCENT
Yeah ... Carmen didn't want to go for it, but I told her you'd appreciate it ... of all people.

CARMEN
(tentative)
Two Brothers and a Stranger ... just like you laid it out ... It was beautiful.

VINCENT
(rising)
When I kicked the six? When I dropped to my knees like that? That's the art of the dump! Right? There's eight thousand in there ... I'm telling you, the odds were a joke. We gotta split, I got Green Room games for like the next three nights ... you sure you don't want in?

Eddie just stares at him, devastated.

VINCENT (contd)
(giving Eddie a look — they might have dumped just to headfuck Eddie)
Hey, good luck with Kennedy.

132 CONTD

Eddie looks helplessly at Janelle.

JANELLE
(awed)
That little prick.

133 INT: UNDERGROUND PARKING OF HOTEL - NIGHT

Car valets in uniform.

Eddie gives ticket to car valet.

EDDIE
White Caddy.

Minnesota Fats sees Eddie and goes to him.

FATS
You played like a hawk yesterday.

EDDIE
The kid dumped, Fats.

FATS
(unmoved)
I thought something ... on the six, right?

Eddie nods.

FATS (contd)
Well, you still looked good though.

EDDIE
Can you believe that?

A Lincoln Continental arrives. Fats gives a big tip to valet. Fats get in the car.

FATS
(casual)
Yeah, well, you been around ... Sometimes you pitch, sometimes you catch. Who you got in the quarter finals tomorrow?

Eddie just stares at Fats.

134 INT: TOURNAMENT HALL - DAY

Only four games left, so the sea of tables looks vast and deserted. Eddie's game is at a corner table.

In the bleachers nearest Eddie are all the players that were knocked out in previous rounds. They sit at various levels -- Julian, Grady, Vincent. Also Janelle.

Fats is at judge's table.

Vincent sits at the lowest level, elbows on knees, Carmen at his side. They're barely ten feet from Eddie.

Eddie's break. He looks freaked.

Vincent and Carmen stare at him with a slight irony.

Eddie pauses, looks at them. Those fuckers did dump just to nail him.

Eddie breaks.

The crowd whistles, applauds. Carmen and Vincent don't react.

Fats watches.

Eddie looks aggrieved.

Eddie hunches down to shoot. He begins to play -- half-hearted.

Eddie drops two balls. Then:

Eddie straightens up ... signs ...

EDDIE
(softly)
Forfeit.

KENNEDY
(casual, disbelieving)
What are you talking about?

EDDIE
You win, I forfeit.

The crowd starts to get murmury, as they catch on.

CLOSE ON JANELLE

She quietly leaves the stands, exits the hall.

SCATTERED VOICES
Yo, Eddie, what's up! Play ball!

CLOSE ON FATS

watching.

Eddie, ignoring everybody, casually, purposefully saunters over to Vincent and Carmen in the front row. Hovering over them, but not looking at them, he leisurely dismantles the Balabushka. It looks to the room like he just strolled over to the sidelines at random to pack up.

VINCENT'S POV

Eddie dismantling his cue. Eddie finally looks at Vincent, briefly, eyebrow cocked, reaches into his back pocket, pulls out the envelope with eight thousand bucks, drops it in Vincent's lap.

EDDIE
(quiet)
Here. We're even ...

CLOSE ON VINCENT AND CARMEN

Vincent furtively peering into the barely opened envelope. He looks smug for the most part.

Eddie exits.

135 INT: LOBBY OF THE TOURNAMENT ROOM - DAY

EDDIE'S POV - Janelle standing by the buffet table waiting for him.

JANELLE
(kissing him on the mouth)
Let's get the hell out of here ... the Bahamas sounds real good about right now.

EDDIE
(distracted, tense and not very convincing)
Yeah, it does, don't it?

JANELLE
(studies Eddie)
Well,
(shrugs)
in any event, we got to move me in with you first.

Eddie is surprised, not unpleased, but still caught up in his own shakiness.

JANELLE (contd)
I'm a big fan of character in people. I don't know if you knew that about me.

EDDIE
(incredulous, half laughing, half crying)
Character?

Eddie sees Carmen over Janelle's shoulder.

EDDIE (contd)
(tenderly, to Janelle)
Stay with me, here.

CARMEN
(offering back envelope)
Vincent says it's yours. You don't want it, you should give to charity.

EDDIE
(no effort to take it)
You guys ...

CARMEN
(blowing her top)
Hey! Listen to this ... what the hell you expect. You jerked him around, you burned him, you dumped him. How do you want him to be?

Beat.

EDDIE
(hoarse)
I'm sorry ...

CARMEN
(thrown, almost in tears)
Sorry? What's that mean? What's sorry? I hate it here. I hate everything and everybody.
(teary)
It was supposed to be real different. I don't get it. It's so bad. It's so bad ...
(beat)
he's sorry.
(words fail her)

EDDIE
You want him back?

CARMEN
Oh, what ... I'm supposed to trust you on something now?

EDDIE
(calmly)
You can trust me on this ... you know why? Because it's for me.

CARMEN
What's for you?

EDDIE
His best game, it's for me.

CARMEN
Everything's for you ... everything we did, everything ... it's always all for you.

EDDIE
(cutting off her rant)
Hey! ... DO ... YOU ... WANT ... HIM ... BACK!

Carmen is startled into silence.

EDDIE (contd)
Get him in the Green Room.

Carmen takes a reflective beat.

CARMEN
(angry, tired)
He won't play you now.

EDDIE
Sure he will ... he's got to ... he knows that.

Beat. They stare at each other. Eddie takes Janelle's hand and starts backing out of the room.

EDDIE (contd)
I'll be in the Green Room.

136 INT: GREEN ROOM - DAY

Eddie, grim faced. Janelle sitting, waiting with him. He's preparing a tight rack of nine-ball by tapping each ball in the diamond with the cue ball. (Makes them hug each other for maximum dispersion on the break.) It's like a priest preparing for Mass. The room is still.

Vincent comes exploding into the room -- mid-ranting. He's got Carmen by the arm.

VINCENT
(as they walk in)
Sonofabitch still doin' it, right!? Still doin' it. He don't care! How can you start with me again! What do you want, a beating?!

EDDIE
I want your game.

VINCENT
My game! You couldn't deal with my game, Jack ... You're out-manned.

EDDIE
Give me your game.

VINCENT
(amazed, but unmoved, otherwise)
You got brass, man, I'll give you that.

Vincent starts backing out, disgusted.

VINCENT (contd)
Nothing's changed. You're still runnin' numbers, you're still using Carmen ... hey, Eddie, drop dead, and have a good life.

Vincent turns his back and walks more briskly.

EDDIE
(startlingly sharp)
Hey! Don't you leave! Vincent ... OK ...
(with great effort)
I'm asking you ... I got no leg to stand on with you ... but I'm asking you ... right now ... give me your game ... I got no time for jumps or hustles anymore.

VINCENT
Why should I believe you?

EDDIE
Because if you don't, the way you're goin', you're gonna wind up making me look like a saint. I know, I taught you.

Vincent is caught up short. There's an expectant beat. It's in his court.

VINCENT
(starting to relent)
Listen to this.

Long beat. Vincent looks back to Carmen who's blank with her own expectation.

VINCENT (contd)
(exhaling)
So what're we playing for?

EDDIE
(relieved)
Hey ... whatever you want ... you're the gorilla.

Vincent bends down to Carmen to take his cue case from her. He looks at her. Carmen acknowledges.

VINCENT
(looking at Carmen, talking to Eddie)
How about we play for the envelope?

Eddie and Vincent lagging for break. Carmen sits. Janelle gets up and leans against wall.

VINCENT (contd)
Eddie, what are you gonna do if I beat your ass?

EDDIE
Then I tell you to carry that envelope around for me.

VINCENT
Oh yeah? Carry it around until when?

EDDIE
Next month in Houston, maybe then --

Eddie wins the lag.

EDDIE (contd)
Month after that, maybe Tahoe ... maybe then ...

CARMEN
You mean Reno. Nothing coming up in Tahoe.

EDDIE
(smiling at her)
You're right. Tahoe, Reno, I get them confused. In any event ...
(hunches down for the break)
... you ain't kicking _my_ ass _any_where ...

VINCENT
What makes you so sure?

EDDIE
(concentrating on the cue)
Hey ... I'm _back_.

Eddie smashes the break.

FADE OUT.

THE END